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# **The identity of Higher Education lecturers in Further Education Colleges**

**Linda McGhie**

**Doctor of Education**

**October 2017**

**Keele University**

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**SUBMISSION OF THESIS FOR A RESEARCH DEGREE****Part I. DECLARATION by the candidate for a research degree. To be bound in the thesis**

Degree for which thesis being submitted: Doctor of Education

Title of thesis The identity of Higher Education lecturers in Further Education Colleges

**This thesis contains confidential information and is subject to the protocol set down for the submission and examination of such a thesis: NO**

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Research Institute/Centre: CSOC.

Name of Lead Supervisor: Dr. J Waterfield

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## **Abstract**

This study explores the identity of Higher Education Lecturers in UK Further Education Colleges [HE in FE]. This sector accounts for 8-10% of HE and offers cheaper, local options to students than traditional HE, supporting successive governments' targets to Widen Participation [WP] and increase skills (Simmons and Lea, 2013). The HE White Paper (DBIS, 2016) suggests continued growth in this area. However, HE in FE may be perpetuating macro-level inequality (Avis and Orr, 2016) and there are calls for HE in FE to be re-defined and raised in profile (Bathmaker, 2016).

Lecturer identity is considered to be significant for emergent student identity (Ashwin, 2009), yet little is known about the background and identity of HE in FE lecturers (Kadi-Hanifi and Elliott, 2016). This research contributes to original knowledge by revealing experiences in background, practices, and relationships, in relation to identity, and it considers potential links to pedagogy.

The qualitative methodology is informed by phenomenology (Smith et al. 2009) and a 'diagram' for teacher identity work (Clarke, 2009). Social-constructionist arguments that teachers engage in struggles and create discourses which become realities are central. Thirteen lecturers, from five institutions in North-West England, participated in in-depth, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. A methodological contribution of this study is the development of a new framework, offering a structured approach for lecturer identity studies.

This study finds participants are fulfilled by working with WP FE students, which these lecturers once were. The lecturers are complicit in creating demanding students, despite struggles with the subsequent workload. There is little motivation to engage in research activity, because it is not rewarded in the FE environment. However, lecturers develop confidence, gain autonomy, and position themselves in order to maintain their coveted degree of freedom. They challenge traditional academic stereotypes, broadening the scope for academic identity (Clegg, 2008).

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## **Glossary**

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| BA       | Bachelor of Arts                               |
| CBHE     | College Based Higher Education                 |
| CHE      | College Higher Education                       |
| CPD      | Continuing Professional Development            |
| DAP      | Degree Awarding Powers                         |
| DfEE     | Department for Education and Employment        |
| DfES     | Department for Education and Science           |
| DBIS     | Department of Business, Innovation and Skills  |
| DfES     | Department for Education and Skills            |
| HE in FE | Higher Education in Further Education Colleges |
| HEFCE    | Higher Education Funding Council in England    |
| HEI      | Higher Education Institution                   |
| HESA     | Higher Education Statistics Agency             |
| HNC      | Higher National Certificates                   |
| HND      | Higher National Diplomas                       |
| FD       | Foundation Degree                              |
| FDAP     | Foundation Degree Awarding Powers              |
| FE       | Further Education                              |

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| FEC    | Further Education College   |
| FSM    | Free School Meals   |
| IPA    | Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis                            |
| ITE    | Initial Teacher Education   |
| MEG    | Mixed Economy Group   |
| NCIHE  | National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education               |
| NNEB   | National Nursery Examination Board                                |
| NS-SEC | National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification                 |
| NVQ    | National Vocational Qualification                                 |
| OFFA   | Office for Fair Access  |
| OFSTED | Offices for Standards in Education Children's Services and Skills |
| PGCE   | Post-Graduate Teaching Certificate                                |
| POLAR  | Participation of Local Areas                                      |
| QAA    | Quality Assurance Agency  |
| TAFE   | Technical and Further Education Colleges [of Australia]           |
| VET    | Vocational and Educational Training                               |
| WP     | Widening Participation  |

## **Chapter one: Introduction**

There is growing debate around the importance of understanding Higher Education in Further Education (Kadi-Hanafi and Elliott, 2016). This study explores the identity of lecturers teaching HE in FE, which is also referred to as College-based Higher Education [CBHE] and these terms are used interchangeably. The United Kingdom [UK] CBHE is similar to the Technical and Further Education Colleges [TAFE] of Australia and the Community Colleges of the United States (Avis and Orr, 2016). In the UK, CBHE has developed significantly in response to UK Government policy on Widening Participation [WP] and vocational skills shortages (Parry et al, 2012; Avis and Orr 2016) by providing an accessible localised alternative to a traditional university. This study contributes to debates on CBHE through an-depth exploration of the identities of a sample of those who teach in this sector.

This study aims to improve the understanding of the social context in which the students learn, by considering lecturer identity. Clarke suggests that trainee teachers should work on understanding identity as they develop their ethical behaviours and professional agency. 'We all have an ethical obligation to reflect on our identity and engage to some degree in 'identity work'' (2009, p187). This study aims to contribute to the growing debate on identity and education (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2009; Day and Gu, 2010). The experiences of HE in FE lecturers are explored in order to form an understanding of their identity and consider whether this links to their approach to teaching and learning, as some argue is likely (Ashwin, 2009). This is important because it links to debates on the students' emergent identity and social mobility.

## **Higher Education in Further Education Colleges**

In the UK, elements of HE provision have existed in some FE Colleges [FECs] for over fifty years, but most FECs began delivering HE, in association with HEIs, in the 1980s and 1990s. The most significant driver for growth was in 1997, following the Dearing Inquiry into HE (Parry et al. 2012). The resulting Dearing Report (NCIHE, 1997) encouraged growth of pre-Bachelor Degree level qualifications, such as the Higher National Certificate [HNC] and the Higher National Diploma [HND]. There was further expansion with the introduction of the Foundation Degree [FD], intended to be work-based and designed to increase vocational skills in the workforce (Parry et al. 2012). Alongside these FDs there is a range of HE teaching qualifications for the post-compulsory sector at undergraduate and post-graduate level, which FE lecturers are expected to gain (Simmons and Walker, 2013).

The neo-liberal agenda for privatisation, free trade and the emergence of business structures within the public sector created changes in professional identities and notions of markets and enterprise within the FE sector (Alexiadou, 2001). It also impacted upon traditional academic HE identities (Harris, 2005; Clegg, 2008). The drive for change and links to market forces has not wavered with, for instance, the White Paper of 2011 (DBIS, 2011) opening further opportunities for private providers, thus widening the market, and offering different fees and delivery modes to potential students (Stoten, 2016). The Higher Education White Paper of May 2016 (DBIS, 2016) has strengthened this further, with a pledge to allow Degree Awarding Powers [DAP] to a much wider range of institutions, more speedily, and to enable them to apply for university status more easily. For colleges in this competitive market place, HE in FE offers another source of income to chase (Dhillon and

Bentley, 2016). Consequently, HE in FE continues to sit within a changing landscape, with a need to respond quickly to market forces and funding streams and to have teaching staff who can cope with a series of challenges, due to the changing demands.

The funding for students embarking on HE in FE programmes mostly comes from the Higher Education Funding Council [HEFCE] both indirectly through partner HEIs, and directly with FECs validating their own programmes in partnership with HEIs (Parry et al. 2012). Large increases in tuition fees, with the onus on the student to borrow and pay back this debt, is coupled with the current Conservative Government austerity-driven public spending cuts (Bathmaker, 2016). Whilst numbers of part-time students have rapidly declined since the introduction of higher fees, falling by 37% between 2008 and 2012 (Avis and Orr, 2016 p 54), HE in FE has maintained a foothold in the market and is now accepted as a 'low-cost way of educating those who cannot afford universities' (Kadi-Hanafi and Elliott, 2016, p4). It is potentially increasingly attractive to students wanting to study locally in order to save on accommodation costs as well as benefiting from the cheaper fees offered by the FECs (Bathmaker, 2016). This raises the need for more studies to determine what is offered to these students and how this might impact on their futures. The system may create limitations for some students making choices (Bathmaker, 2016).

Kadi-Hanafi and Elliott (2016) welcome the recent growth in research around HE in FE and call for it to inform policy around provision and training in these settings. This study contributes to the growing interest in this area of HE, with its links to Widening Participation [WP] and social justice as well as to debates on HE identities. There is a recent call for HE in FE to be a more recognised entity, and 'distinctive' with a raised profile (Bathmaker, 2016, p

28). This study will contribute to debates around distinctiveness of the identities of those teaching and the consequential implications for those who are learning, helping to fill a gap in our knowledge for this marginal yet important sector.

### **Widening participation**

Widening Participation [WP] is a term generally used to refer to the process of increasing numbers entering HE from under-represented groups. It is relevant to this study because it links to the context in which CBHE has arisen following changes in Government policy to increase entry into HE to young people from traditionally non-participating families. This is related to trying to improve skills, but also to create upward social mobility for these groups and ultimately social justice (Parry, et al. 2012; Chowdry et al. 2013; Thompson and Simmons, 2013; Orr, 2014).

The following profiles can be described as WP students: ‘people from lower socio-economic groups, mature students, part-time learners, learners from ethnic minority groups, vocational and work-based learners, disabled learners and care leavers’ (Moore et al. 2013, pii). Statistically these WP groups are sometimes identified and measured by the numbers in receipt of Free School Meals [FSM] (Chowdry et al. 2013). The numbers of lower socio-economic groups entering HE, using FSMs as an indicator, continues to sit at around 14% compared to 33% of pupils who are not eligible for FSM and so some argue that despite these opportunities, the situation in relation to access to HE is no better than it ever was (Chowdry, et al. 2013, p431). The links between social mobility and education, including HE in FE, continue to be debated in relation to whether or not changes are evident on a macro-



level (Avis and Orr, 2016). In this study, the focus is upon who teaches these WP students, in these HE in FE settings, because this has implications for the WP students' learning experiences which is related to their emergent identity (Ashwin, 2009). Therefore, this thesis presents research findings and discussions which link to WP, in relation to policy context and the wider issues of WP, rather than having WP as a main theme or focus.

## **Identity**

Identity is centrally placed in this study because it has emerged as a central theme in our understanding of education and social mobility (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2009), which is understood by relating it to stratifications and positions in society. In simplified terms this is where those moving upwards gain societal advantage and those moving downwards lose position in relation to status or income. This has links to the economy and global competitiveness and the emergent neo-liberal view that '...the development of human capital is rhetorically constructed as pivotal to the development of individual and societal competitiveness' (Avis and Orr, 2016, p50). The connection between education and developing 'human capital' gives rise to the need for a better understanding of the identity of learners, and their teachers, in order to understand class-based choices and outcomes. Particular educational and indeed occupational 'communities' form practices and '...issues of education should be addressed first and foremost in terms of identities and modes of belonging and only secondarily in terms of skills and information' (Wenger, 1998, p. 263). Debates on identity have formed a significant contribution to our understanding of the self and society, in relation to gender, sexuality, race, social groups and class (Goffman, 1956;

Erikson, 1979; Jenkins, 1996; Lawler, 2008). Identity continues to be difficult to define due to its 'slippery' and changing interpretation and use (Lawler, 2014, p1). It is the individual and unique elements that make one human stand apart from others and yet it is the social elements that bind us to groups in complex ways (Jenkins, 2008). Identity is taken here as a complex process of negotiating and *becoming* and the learning environment is seen as influential on both the learner and teacher and who they become (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Infinito, 2003a; Ashwin, 2009).

Following the widespread changes and new roles and opportunities that the neo-liberal marketisation of HE has created, identity attracts academic interest (Harris, 2005; Barnett and Di Napoli, 2008; Clegg, 2008; Fitzmaurice, 2013). This is important because the relationship between the identity of the lecturer and their teaching is recognised as significant for creating particular teaching and learning interactions in HE (Ashwin, 2009) and communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). The identity and role of the HE in FE lecturer has recently been explored through several small-scale studies (Young, 2002; Burkhill et al. 2008; Feather 2010, 2012; Scott, 2010; Wilson and Wilson, 2011; Creasy 2013; Simmons and Lea, 2013; Kadi-Hanifi and Keenan, 2016).

This study aims to contribute to these debates, through its focus on the idiographic detail of the phenomenological experiences of the individuals, in these HE lecturing roles within FECs. This study develops a framework, derived from one produced by Clarke, which he specifically calls a 'diagram for doing 'identity work'' (2009, p190 and p191). This is adapted in this study in order to support a consistent, reliable approach to understanding identity, and to guide the research questions and the analysis.

## **Rationale**

Empirical work on experiences and identity within CBHE, such as this study, are important because this sector accounts for 8-10% of all HE provision (Simmons and Lea, 2013) and it is potentially set to grow further (HE White Paper, 2016). Whilst previously a neglected area of study, in recent years it has attracted increasing academic attention raising its profile as an area that needs further analysis to support our understanding of how this sector works, student experience, and to support policy formation for the future (Turner et al, 2009; Parry et al. 2012; Robinson 2012; Meredith, 2013; Simmons and Lea, 2013; Avis and Orr, 2016; Bathmaker, 2016; Dhillon and Bentley, 2016; Kadi-Hanifi and Elliott, 2016).

The environment of HE in FE is described as at the edge (Feather, 2009), a hybrid (Simmons and Lea, 2013), problematic (Creasy, 2013) and marginal (Scott, 2010). Questions are often raised around whether these lecturers are getting a fair deal; some argue that they are not because of the lack of time for scholarly activity and research (Feather, 2010), and that this lack of 'HE-ness' can impact on student experience (Creasy 2013; Simmons and Lea, 2013). However, it has created a type of HE that some students actively seek out in order to gain higher levels of support (Meredith, 2013; Stoten, 2016). Whether it truly widens participation is debated, because whilst it has done so on one level, others argue that it has not truly addressed inequality in society on a macro-level (Avis and Orr, 2016; Bathmaker, 2016). There is a strong argument therefore, to try to better understand the experiences and identities of teachers, as well as learners, in HE environments, in relation to contextual debates and the identity formation of the students (Ashwin, 2009).

## **Aims and research questions**

The aim of this study is to explore the identity of this emergent role, of the HE in FE lecturer, within this relatively marginal space. Identity is conceptualised as being a series of multiple strands that combine to form the individual and these are explored through aspects of the participant's background, the elements of self-practice in their role and relations with authority. This is considered in relation to fulfilment in the role and the impact on pedagogical practice. Using in-depth accounts of a sample of lecturers' experiences and views, the analysis aims to consider the overarching research question: what is the identity of the Higher Education lecturer in Further Education colleges? This is explored through the research questions:

### **1 How is being a HE in FE lecturer located within the individual's background?**

This question seeks out the personal history of the lecturer from early childhood through to current qualifications and aspirations. An exploration of parental occupation, education, and early career are considered so as to better understand the identity of the HE in FE lecturer in terms of personal influences. This allows an understanding of background, levels of agency and personal self-esteem in the role.

### **2 How does the individual experience the HE in FE role, in terms of individual self-practice and relationships with authority?**

This question explores the daily aspects that define the role, such as teaching, preparing for teaching, supporting students and relations with authority sources, such as managers. This

allows an understanding of the way in which the role is lived out and experienced by the individual in relation to aspects such as autonomy and freedom.

### 3 How does the identity of the HE in FE lecturer impact on their pedagogical practice?

This question seeks to find links between the aspects of the identity of the HE in FE lecturer, following on from background and self-practices in the role, in order to examine potential impact on their teaching and learning interactions. The potential impact on pedagogical approaches is explored through the examination of areas of fulfilment and the creation of discourses around self-practices.

#### **The methodology for this study**

This qualitative study uses Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis [IPA] (Smith et al, 2009) to explore the experiences and identity of HE in FE lecturers. This study also utilises a framework drawn from a Foucauldian-based 'diagram for teacher 'identity work'' produced by Clarke (2009, p191). From this study a new adapted framework emerges which, it is proposed, could be useful to others engaged in similar identity studies.

Following a pilot study, this research focused upon thirteen main study participants who were working as HE in FE lecturers, in five FECs in the North of England. Their experiences were analysed through a preliminary questionnaire, which gathered elements of background data. This was followed by lengthy in-depth interviews in relation to background, self-practice, relations with authority and areas of fulfilment within these areas linking to motivation. The findings contribute to the understanding of lecturer identity formation and the potential impact of this on students in HE in FE, through teaching and

learning interactions. The emergent identity of such lecturers has implications for debates on pedagogy and student identity and, ultimately, widening participation on micro and macro-levels.

### **Personal motivation for this study**

The social constructionist approach and the use of phenomenology requires the researcher to fully explore their own position and interests in relation to their study (Smith et al. 2009; Burr, 2015). This helps to locate personal assumptions and supports the understanding of the design of the study and the analysis and interpretation of the data (Smith et al. 2009).

Such self-assessment of a journey towards personal outcomes or future goals is a challenging task, entwined with personal perspective and coloured by personal experience.

The lens of reflection cannot be truly objective, even with the support of 'bracketing' through use of theory (Ehrich, 2003, p51). Whilst the contextual literature and wider debates can inform and support theories behind the 'choices' or outcomes, such a reflection remains grounded within my world view. It sits within the bounds of the identity that I consciously or sub-consciously wish to project.

Through a reflective exploration, which was embarked upon before starting the design of the study, I came to know myself better. I saw the links between personal history and the interests of my emerging research questions. What follows is drawn from this to give a short autobiographical account utilising a phenomenological methodology, based on personal recollections and accounts of experience. It attempts to get the most objective view possible of subjective experience. It is a 'quest for meaning', that looks for the essence

of my own idiographic experience (Ehrich, 2003, p42). This existential phenomenon is only mine. The aim is to reflect upon my experience in relation to the events and situations that, in my view, were influential in the choices that I have made around my career and this research and in the way in which I interpret this. I am exposing my views so that I can better understand my own assumptions. This is in order to create as valid and honest a piece of work as I can and by understanding how I use hermeneutics to interpret the experiences of the HE in FE lecturers in the data analysis. In the following section I choose a series of synchronic snapshots from my life, which were influential periods or critical incidents in leading me to this study.

### **Personal rationale for the study**

When I was a young child my mother, a teacher, shared with me her own childhood ambitions of teaching, of how she kept registers, organised her books into a library and set up a classroom for her dolls. My early memories of play involved these same symbols of teacher identity and I played at being a teacher, I wanted to be a teacher and I believed that I would be a teacher.

Socio-economic backgrounds and familial influences on children are the main determinants of children's educational direction and achievements (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Hall and Raffo, 2009). Given parental experience and parental and personal expectations, achieving entry to university at 18 seemed likely, as did a late marriage and delayed family. However, I left school at 16 to go into FE, married at 24 and had two children by 26. I went into FE because when I was 16 and in the 'fifth form', the all-girl school, where I was happy

and confident, was combined with the local boys' school and we moved into their premises. Some argue that women are now adept at inhabiting 'masculine spheres' but in 1980, I was not (McRobbie, 2009, p85). I felt displaced, out of my comfort zone and a new lack of self-confidence emerged. At this time, I went on an organised visit to the local FEC. We were shown into the rooms of the National Nursery Examination Board [NNEB] nursery-nursing course and at that moment my future changed; this was an environment I wanted to be in. I successfully applied for a place and the feeling of leaving school was liberating, and I was very happy in the college environment.

On completion, I secured a job as a teaching assistant at a residential Special Educational Needs (SEN) FE College in a nearby town. I gained two A' levels at evening classes, in preparation for applying to university, at some point in the future. I harboured feelings of inadequacy, a lack of fulfilment and on reflection, I feel this was based on my identity as somebody who had not been to university, despite feeling capable.

Eventually, I acted upon these feelings and applied for a place on a BA (Hons) at a nearby, newly-formed, post-92 university. It was 1993 and it had taken ten years since leaving the FEC to enter HE and I now had two young children. After completing the degree, I stayed on to study at Master's Level and I got some teaching work on the undergraduate programmes. This was fulfilling and I enjoyed it very much, but once the studies were complete, the teaching dried up and I was left wondering which way to turn. I remembered my early ambitions of teaching in school and successfully gained a place on a PGCE with QTS for SEN Primary. I was not particularly happy in the school environment, which felt restricted and



small after being in HE and, once qualified, I applied and got a post as a lecturer in Child Care and Education, at the local FE College, the one where I studied at 16.

Teaching in FE was hard work, but I was very happy in this environment. The hairdressers, engineers, chefs, health care, child care, joiners, builders and artists came together to produce a vibrant mix of characters and a dynamic fast-moving environment. At this time, I began to realise the politics, legislation, funding, performativity scores and pay were major issues, and the workload was heavy. I taught across a range of programmes and gained experience with 14-19 year olds, mature adult returners, Diplomas and NVQs, and I gained a cross-college responsibility for Widening Participation in HE. This was the early 2000s and there were HE programmes running, including Foundation Degrees in Early Years and Children's Integrated Learning and Support, Cert Ed and PGCE teaching programmes, but the opportunity for me to teach on these did not arise.

I became interested in the notion of studying education as a subject and embarked upon an MBA in Education, at Keele University. I remained teaching on the FE programmes in the college, but began to consider whether there might be openings within the HE teaching at the setting or beyond. A vacancy arose for a Senior Lecturer role in a nearby HEI. There was particular reference to working with a cohort of CPD staff from the very Special Needs FE College where I had worked many years earlier. I applied and successfully got the post. It is many years later now and I am still in the same HE institution. I have seen many changes and worked on numerous programmes including, at times, franchised and validated Foundation Degrees run in FECs. Whilst I have worked with colleagues in relation to HE in FE, I have never been a HE in FE lecturer.

At the outset of this research, I did not feel that I had an 'axe to grind' or that I was either overwhelmingly for or against HE in FE; although I was a strong advocate for Widening Participation. The HE in FE environment was not central to my role or to my own identity, yet I understood the language and the origins, and I felt a strong academic interest in the subject.

I recognise that 'all stories are perspectival; none are objectively true; no story has one meaning' (Bolton, 2010, p205). Further exploration of my assumptions and the design of the study are considered in the methodology chapter. The pilot study showed how some of my questions were based on a presumption that I knew how others felt or that I imagined they felt as I did. A reflection following the process of completing the study is given in the concluding chapter.

## **Chapter overview**

This introduction is followed by:

Chapter Two: Literature Review. Academic identities are considered in relation to their contested nature. This is followed by the context of HE in FE which is considered in relation to the developments in the sector, links to Widening Participation, and emergent debates around the identity of HE in FE lecturers. The key concepts of structure and agency, identity and the use of theory to understand this, ethical struggles, motivation and autonomy are explored in relation to interpretations for this study and the importance of identity as an area of study.

Chapter Three: Methodology. This considers the aims of the study in relation to the research questions and the design of the project. The study is located within the qualitative paradigm and utilises Social Constructionism theory (Burr, 2015). The Foucauldian based diagram for teacher identity work (Clarke, 2009, p191) is discussed in relation to its use in the pilot study and in its adaptation for the design and analysis of the main study data collection. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis [IPA] is the methodology employed to guide the data gathering and analysis (Smith et al. 2009). This allows for a study that looks for the phenomenological experiences of the individual; that is the idiographic, and the use of hermeneutics, which is the interpretation of the text produced following transcription of the interviews. The analysis process is outlined as a series of stages using repeatable techniques and methods to support the validity and reliability of the research (Smith, et al., 2009). The formation of the questionnaire, which gathers additional background data, and the development of the interview questions, is considered.

Chapters Four to Seven are the analysis chapters:

Chapter Four: The Background of the HE in FE lecturer. This chapter considers data from the questionnaires and some of the interview data to explore the background of the lecturer and their experiences of childhood, education, early career, and personal reflections on their 'position' as a HE in FE lecturer. Original text from the transcripts shows the participants' reflections and opinions, and allows for nuanced analysis of their identity and their emotional reactions to this, in line with IPA methods (Smith et al., 2009).

Chapter Five: Self-practices [I]: preparation, teaching, marking and scholarly activity. This chapter explores the self-practices commonly experienced by the HE in FE lecturers.

Aspects of their role such as preparation, teaching, marking, and supporting students are considered using nuanced examples of interview text and my interpretation of this.

Struggles, fulfilment and creation of discourses and realities are explored in relation to these self-practices and aspects of identity formation, in line with social constructionist theories (Infinito, 2003a; Clarke, 2009).

Chapter Six: Self-Practices [II]: positioning, context, environment and pedagogy. This chapter continues with the theme of self-practice, by looking for reflective responses to elements of the role. It focuses upon how the participant describes their role to others, their views of HE in FE context, views on the nature of student support, and reflections on pedagogical practices.

Chapter Seven: Relationships with authority in the role. This chapter explores relationships with authority, in terms of views and relationships with management and other power sources. It uses examples drawn from the transcripts, interwoven with analysis, to explore ways in which participants attempt to control elements of their role and how they create autonomous spaces to exert freedoms with the curriculum and classroom.

Chapter Eight: Discussion of the findings. In this chapter the analysis of the data is discussed in relation to the research questions. The discussion considers the importance of the background of the lecturers, the self-practices and relations with authority and the pedagogical implications of this for students in these settings.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion. This chapter offers concluding thoughts on the contribution of the study and a revised framework for future lecturer identity work. There is a reflection on the processes and outcomes of the study in relation to the personal reflection offered at the outset.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

This chapter consists of three key areas in preparation for the data analysis and the discussion about the identity of the HE in FE lecturer. The first section, following the introduction, offers an overview of the wider discussion around academic identity. The second section explores the UK HE in FE context with a discussion of the literature and findings so far in relation to the HE in FE lecturer. The third section considers debates around conceptualising identity and associated theory, in preparation for the methodology chapter.

The HE in FE lecturer is one of the new academic roles in one of the emergent, cross-boundary, marginal spaces about which little is known (Clegg, 2008). Gaining knowledge about those in this role is helpful in supporting our understanding of the hierarchies of UK HE and the subsequent issues of widening participation with its links to social mobility and social justice. This is important because different HE environments contribute to cultural reproduction which can perpetuate inequality (Clegg, 2011). The creation of beliefs and practices arising from identity, which the HE in FE lecturers may hold dear, may create a particular type of teaching and learning environment and understanding this contributes to debates around these new forms of HE. HE in FE now accounts for 189,040 HE (2013/14 Higher Education Statistics Agency [HESA]) enrolments. Whilst this is still only a small proportion compared to the 2,299,355 HE (2013/14 HESA) enrolments in traditional

universities, it is a significant number that deserves attention (Dhillon and Bentley, 2016, p137).

Britzman argued that teaching itself is a process of becoming (1991) rather than being, and this view is recently maintained by Boyd et al. (2015). Studies of teacher identity have found that teachers are dependent on situational and personal factors giving fluidity to their teaching identity according to, for instance, the length of time in the role, the nature of the school, and home life (Day et al, 2006, p601). Teacher identity is argued to underpin the efficacy of teachers and their well-being and this study looks to find whether this is also relevant to teaching HE in FE (Day and Kington, 2008; Day and Gu, 2010).

Identity is considered here as situated, partly given, and an ongoing project (Lawler, 2014). Theoretical literature on identity is explored and conceptualised giving a theoretical base before discussing the methodology of the study in the following chapter. This study considers identity in relation to the backgrounds of the HE in FE lecturers and their view on their own professional self-practices, through a phenomenological lens.

### **The research aim and questions**

The research aim of understanding the HE in FE lecturer's identity has guided this chapter in preparation for exploring the three questions. These are:

- 1 How is being a HE in FE lecturer located within the individual's background?
- 2 How does the individual experience the HE in FE role, in terms of individual self-practice and relationships with authority?

### 3 How does the identity of the HE in FE lecturer impact on their pedagogical practice?

#### **The wider view of academic identity**

Due to the changing landscape of HE in the UK and globally, varying academic identities are considered to be under threat, fragmented, marginalised, and riddled with complexities (Harris, 2005; Barnett and Di Napoli, 2008; Archer, 2008; Clegg, 2008). This is due, partly, to the neo-liberal development of marketised 'mass higher education systems' and emergent variation in the categorisations for HEIs and university institutions including traditional, civic, Russell Group and post-92 (Scott, 2009, p403).

The *academic* cannot be defined as a singular professional identity, and this study contributes to the process of understanding the growing complexity of academic identities beyond the traditional subject discipline specialist (Clegg, 2008). Academic identity is contested and recognised as changing (Harris 2005; Archer 2008; Clegg 2008; Fitzmaurice, 2013). There is considerable focus upon differences in academic identity in the managerial, performance-based, output measuring practice of the neo-liberal environment compared to the traditional HEI models that precede these (Morley, 2003; Findlow, 2012; Whitchurch, 2013).

The notion of the academic as an autonomous authority in their discipline has shifted, with an interest in teaching and learning finding greater ground (Clegg, 2008). Research output, which is measured through the Research Excellence Framework (REF), has dominated much activity, but teaching is soon to have its own performativity measure in the form of the



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). This adds further interest to the teaching role of HEIs.

Clegg suggests caution around using a singular view of the historical academic figure, but finds that ‘...traditional academic identities based on collegiality and the exercise of autonomy, which were emergent from traditional elite positions, and whose bearers were mostly, white, male and middle class, are indeed under threat’ (Clegg, 2008, p331). This creates access for different types of lecturers, where for instance more women and people from black and minority-ethnic groups have greater chances to gain roles, because these spaces are less dominated by the white, middle class male (Eveline, 2005). The development of degree programmes for some previously non-academic disciplines, such as nursing, has also brought a new body of practitioner lecturers into HEIs (Findlow, 2012).

Understanding the background of lecturers teaching in these marginal spaces, not least HE in FECs, will help gain a clearer picture of the environment. Potentially, there is a process of widening participation in teaching HE for lecturers from non-traditional backgrounds, within the sector. These marginal spaces, in this marketised environment, have given rise to new academic opportunities and should not be considered as necessarily negative (Clegg, 2008).

This changing range of professional environments has led to the co-existence of a variety of these new identities at a personal level for those working within the sector. Findlow found that the former nurses wrestled with notions of academic identity and maintained value systems entrenched in their nursing careers (2012). These new academic identities are sometimes referred to as *hybrid* identities (Bathmaker, 2015). This is on a wider level across

the HE sector (Clegg, 2008; Coates and Mahat, 2014) and within HE in FE specifically where the 'notion of a hybrid refers to the extent that HE in FE borrows from, and then fuses, aspects of the two wider sectors in which it has been immersed' (Simmons and Lea, 2013, p4). There is some evidence to suggest that the use of the term hybrid is associated with something negative: 'It may seem unavoidable to see the emergence of 'hybridised' models as carrying gloomy consequences for universities...' (Coates and Mahat, 2014, p587). Whilst Coates and Mahat go on to argue that this is not always the case, there is an implication that quality is less. The given meaning of the academic, in its most traditional form, possibly creates a deficit position for new forms of academic identity where the hybrid is seen as something less than it ought to be, and Feather finds it insulting (2016). Increasing recognition around the significance of such marginalised HE experiences and identities has raised the profile of the debate and this study contributes to this growing interest by considering the experiences of those in this sector and whether hybrid is an appropriate term (McGhie, 2015).

## **Higher Education in the Further Education Context**

### **Overview**

The sector of HE in FE has seen significant growth in numbers as students generally entering HE have increased (Simmons and Lea, 2013). The growth stems from the 1990s when New Labour set a target of achieving 50% of school leavers going into HE (Parry et al. 2012). In the light of this, the body of literature on HE in FE has grown in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Kadi-Hanifi and Elliott, 2016). The way in which HE sits within FE, differs

between settings with some colleges having their own HE centres with separate buildings and facilities whereas, in others, HE sits entirely within the FE College (Simmons and Lea, 2013).

The report by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills [DBIS] (Parry et al. 2012) uses statistics and experiential evidence, and finds that the students within HE in FE present as a mix of part and full-time, school-leavers and under-24s, mature adult returners, and lifelong learners. Most of these are embarking on a range of programmes including Foundation Degree [FD] or Bachelor of Art [BA] programmes, Initial Teacher Education [ITE] qualifications and Continuing Professional Development [CPD]. Some of the ITE programmes offer internal provision for college lecturing staff as they come from a variety of vocational backgrounds and are often lacking a teaching qualification (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005). The QAA report: Supporting the Creation of a HE ethos for College Higher Education (CHE) (Simmons and Lea, 2013) finds that students feel supported and satisfied with the HE in FE offer and actively choose this environment.

### **The growth of HE within FE**

The background of HE in FE cannot be separated from the context of FE, which traditionally offered vocational and technical training for a range of skills-based employment. This includes 16-19 year olds, adults gaining or enhancing qualifications and, through links with schools, offers opportunities for 14-16 year olds. Some FECs have provided HE since the 1950s and 1960s, but most began the provision in the late 1980s and 1990s with HNCs and

HNDs (Parry et al, 2012). The Further and Higher Education Act of 1992, removed FE from Local Authority control and the process of incorporation started in 1993 (Parry et al. 2012).

Underlying the move away from local authority control was the neo-liberal agenda of the 1990s and the consequential marketisation of further and higher education (Brown and Carasso, 2013; Simmons and Lea 2013). This meant that colleges controlled their own business and contracts and began operating on a business model having to gain income and have a competitive offer. This brought 'turmoil and suffering, particularly for teaching staff' as enormous changes in employment terms and conditions were introduced into the FECs (Simmons, 2008, p368). There was fragmentation within the service, low morale and mismanagement, with changes in the fundamental culture of governance away from pedagogy towards managerialism (Gleeson and Shain, 1999; Alexiadou, 2001). Heavy workloads and lower pay than school and university colleagues, lack of funding and the neo-liberal agenda of marketisation left FE in a state of disarray. Nevertheless, the economic drive to increase skills, widen participation and the global development of a knowledge-based economy have allowed HE in FE to survive and indeed grow in this environment (Kadi-Hanifi and Elliott, 2016).

The Dearing Report (NCIHE, 1997) encouraged expansion of HE in FE and the emergence of Foundation Degrees (FD). These largely replaced HNDs and HNCs, and became available to almost every FEC in England (Parry et al. 2012). The Foundation Degree consultation document (DfEE, 2000) saw FDs as an opportunity to develop a more inclusive society through broadening HE to vocational subjects and under-represented groups. This has offered opportunities to professionalise previously low status work by offering sub-degree

level qualifications. It has also served as a vehicle to raise standards of practice within these vocational areas. This is sometimes perceived by colleges as part of their civic duty and something that they do for the greater good. Avis and Orr (2016) use the example of Early Years Foundation Degrees which offer recognition to those, mostly female, workers in this profession and also improves the level and standard of care offered to young children, by linking practice in the workplace to theory.

### **Widening participation and the links to social justice**

Social justice is a concept which requires equity and a 'just ordering of society' (Buettner-Schmidt and Lobo, 2012, p948). How such a 'just ordering' is achieved, or indeed the reasons why it is not achieved by successive governments, is a key interest for sociologists (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2009; Clegg, 2011). Recent research, using large quantifiable data drawn from HEFCE, suggests that whilst HE in FE does change lives on an individual level, it is not contributing to macro-level improvements in social mobility, with HE in FE graduates still not reaching the same earning potential as traditional HEI graduates (Orr, 2014; Avis and Orr, 2016). Therefore, in relation to social justice, HE in FE may not be supporting the creation of a 'just ordering'. Social justice is linked with social mobility whereby economic advantage can be gained by moving upwards or indeed lost by becoming disadvantaged (Firth, 2012). Avis and Orr warn against conflating WP with social mobility and find in their analysis that 'there is no evidence that social mobility based upon outcome has been achieved' through the offer of HE in FE (2016, p59). Students graduating from HE in FE do not achieve income levels in line with other graduates (Avis and Orr, 2016).

To treat social mobility and entry into higher education in its simplest form does not address the wider issues of society. The notion that gaining qualifications, by embarking upon a HE in FE Degree, will truly create social mobility is argued to be 'cruel optimism because HE in FE cannot systematically lessen social or economic disadvantages' (Avis and Orr, 2016, p61). Clegg also asserts that attending Higher Education 'in less elite settings' will not in itself remove cultural barriers to social mobility and that 'those in elite institutions are largely involved in a logic of reproduction not transformation' (2011, p94). Even the traditions and extra-curricular activities experienced by students in university can be as significant as the official curriculum (Bronner, 2012). These are often imbibed in the university experience and part of the creation of student identity (Morris, 2015).

Widening Participation [WP] is a term which refers to the process of encouraging those who are able, but less likely to enter HE, to have access to HE programmes (Chowdry et al. 2013). The Office for Fair Access [OFFA], a Government body, regulates and funds WP initiatives within universities (Moore et al. 2013). The process of WP involves increasing the numbers entering HE from under-represented groups who, for a range of socio-economic reasons, are unlikely to opt for HE at school leaving age despite being thought capable of achieving at this level.

There are several descriptors offered for defining WP students. In a recent OFFA report they are given to include students 'from lower socio-economic groups, mature students, part-time learners, learners from ethnic minority groups, vocational and work-based learners, disabled learners and care leavers' (Moore et al. 2013, pii). The WP groups can also be identified and measured by the numbers in receipt of Free School Meals [FSM]

whilst within compulsory school age (Chowdry et al. 2013). In a further attempt to categorise these groups, to offer a demographic breakdown of students in HE, the Higher Education Funding Council [HEFCE] produces statistics based on Participation of Local Area [POLAR] quintiles. These give a demographic grouping to neighbourhoods on a ranking from 1 to 5 with 1 as most disadvantaged and 5 as most advantaged, and whilst this is a crude measure, a better or more accurate method is unavailable (Avis and Orr, 2016, p55). Avis and Orr have used this HEFCE data to show that despite the growth of HE in FE 'the students proportionally remain those who are most disadvantaged' (2016, p56).

HE students in the FECs are drawn from the local population, and students 'chose their college mostly because of the courses available and the college's proximity to their home or place of work' (Parry et al. 2012, p15). The difference in this close-to-home and higher-support-package offered by FECs is viewed in a positive light by some, with students from WP backgrounds acknowledged as needing higher levels of support (Scott, 2009; Simmons and Lea 2013). Students on HE in FE courses often experience smaller class sizes and students have more tutor contact and a learning culture that they recognised as different to that in HEIs, placing higher importance upon classroom activities and lower importance on extra-curricular activities (Parry et al. 2012). Similarly, Meredith (2013) found students chose CBHE because they felt that they would be more nurtured than they would in mainstream HE settings.

Chowdry (2013) has shown that by the time students make choices about HE, the effects of their social background has already prevented them making unrestricted choices such as entry to more traditional HEIs. This fits with Bourdieu's theories on habitus and the links to

education as the background of the child steers them in a direction that reproduces society (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). HE in FE offers opportunities for widening participation at a micro-level as individuals do transform their lives, but it is not dealing with wider inequalities and change on a macro-level in society (Avis and Orr, 2016; Bathmaker, 2016). These students may be limiting horizons and 'restricting their options and choices, consciously or unconsciously because of their family, material, cultural and social circumstances' (Parry et al. 2012, p15).

Therefore, whilst HE in FE can offer opportunity for widening participation, paradoxically it maintains the status quo for the traditional universities and their students and it potentially creates a more polarised system than existed previously. Bathmaker argues that recent government rhetoric gives a 'more overt emphasis on different types of education for different 'types' of people, linked to the promotion of vocational education as a 'better option' for many individuals' (Bathmaker, 2016, p22). Stoten goes further by suggesting that 'central government appears to prefer to preserve the differentiated education system that separates levels and domains of knowledge into hierarchies of educational institution' (2016, p10).

Husband and Jeffrey (2016) call for revision and expansion of HE within FE (they focus on Scottish FE in particular). They suggest a wider range of industries would benefit from vocationally oriented HE qualifications. Significantly, they go beyond the deficit that some look for when discussing HE in FE and argue that there is room for 'greater value to be placed on the skills and methods prevalent in FE to deliver a vocationally focused HE provision that values the practices of both sectors' (Husband and Jeffreys, 2016, p71).



Bathmaker (2016), makes a similar case for better definition and understanding of the sector and argues that it should receive more investment. This view could raise the status of the skills and vocational knowledge on a par with the research based activities of HEIs. This potentially positive outlook serves as a useful reminder that over-valuing the traditional academic research element of the HEI can lead to undervaluing the significance of vocational skill and expertise and the type of vocationally-based research that could be nurtured in these areas.

### **Partnerships**

The most common way in which HE courses are run in FECs is through a financial partnership with a HEI producing and validating a programme, and forming agreements with FECs about how these can be run in their settings. A range of factors have limited the development of in HE in FE, including the local and regional specific requirements, poor strategic planning and a structure that polarises FE from HE (Parry et al, 2012; Feather 2013). Despite their differences, these two sectors have had to work together to provide HE in FE. Some colleges have recently gained Foundation Degree Awarding Powers [FDAP], but partnerships with HEIs are still in place for quality purposes (Dhillon and Bentley, 2016). For all of the rhetoric around upskilling and WP, it appears that one of the major incentives for the colleges to offer HE is because it is an important source of finance, with changing funding streams driving activity (Dhillon and Bentley, 2016).

There are common reasons for the strategic rationales for FECs and HEIs engaging in partnerships including institutional legacy, the regional 'footprint' with the emphasis on

employer engagement in building skills, and the need to meet the widening participation agenda (Parry et al. 2012, p11). The minutiae of how partnerships work in practice is explored in terms of ways to facilitate relationships, understand peculiarities, and establish features (Abramson et al. 1996; Parry and Thompson, 2002; Dhillon, 2007; Dhillon and Bentley, 2016).

Relationships between partner institutions appear to be generally positive, although FECS are proactive in moving to different HEI partners if they need to change the portfolio or improve relations (Parry et al. 2012, p14). There can be some tensions around expectation and workload, differences in approach to scholarly activity, and an assumption by HE in FE lecturers that things are different for tutors in the partner HEIs; common themes in some literature (Burkhill et al., 2008; Feather 2010; Wilson and Wilson, 2011; Creasy, 2013).

Despite the fragmentation and differences in operational process, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education [QAA] reports showed that ‘the reviewers had confidence in the standards of around 94% of the provision’ which is comparable to HE in HEIs (Parry, et al. 2012, p11).

Students who successfully complete their FDs have usually been offered opportunities to relocate to ‘top-up’ BA courses at the partner HEIs (Ooms, et al. 2012). Recently, the opportunity to complete the full BA Hons within the FECs emerged with ‘top-ups’ and full BA Hons, now offered in some FE settings (Griffiths and Lloyd, 2009; Parry et al. 2012). Some FECs are applying for their own Degree Awarding Powers (DAP) as well as Foundation Degree Awarding Powers (FDAP), and there is potential for a significantly changing

landscape as FECs become independent from HEI partners. This will create a source of competition for student numbers for FECs and their local HEIs (Simmons and Lea, 2013).

In light of the Higher Education White Paper of May 2016, (DBIS, 2016) the growth of HE in non-traditional settings is set to go further with Degree Awarding Powers (DAP) likely to become easier to attain, not just in FECs, but in a range of independent providers. If these institutions maintain students for their own 'top-up', one further impact will be that the more elite HEIs will continue recruiting only their more traditional entrants. They can provide access to HE entirely through partner colleges, rather than finding ways to encourage these students to study in-house. Not only will these students spend the first sub-degree level study of the FD in the FEC, but they will never go to the HEI for the BA Hons top-up year. This seems likely to increase the verticality of the system even further.

### **Management and autonomy**

Whilst the numbers of students taking HE programmes in FECs has grown, HE still accounts for only a small proportion of students within the FECs at around 4% (Parry et al. 2012, p63). Perhaps not surprisingly therefore, the management of HE, within the FEC, tends to be dominated by FE culture. Exploring the practices and relations with management informs debates on the HE in FE lecturer role. Relations with authority sources are a significant area within this study which seeks to find how such relations might contribute to elements of identity.

The financial advantages of HE in the FECs have brought the specific needs of HE higher up the agenda for some colleges (Dhillon and Bentley, 2016). There appears to be a strategic

and commercial interest in growing HE in FE and an aspirational interest in raising the college kudos through HE and partnerships with HEIs (Dhillon and Bentley, 2016). There has been growth of HE centres, sometimes termed university centres within the FECs (Simmons and Lea, 2013) and a range of specific HEI activities such as graduation ceremonies and devoted websites (Dhillon and Bentley, 2016). However, there is a general consensus in the literature that developing a HE ethos within the colleges can be difficult in the FE dominated culture, where vocational skills carry most kudos and the premium is in teaching contact hours (Jones 2006; Feather 2012; Simmons and Lea, 2013).

The rise in the marketised environment of FE has 'raised the spectre of government and employer micromanagement of professionalism in the classroom and workplace' (Gleeson et al. 2015, p80). The changes are not restricted to the FECs; there have been changes to traditional HEIs with evidence to show that within HEIs, even in more traditional universities, managerial practices are the norm (Watson, 2008). The broad HE environment now consists of 'third space' managerial, professional and academic identities (Whitchurch, 2013), and there is fragmentation and a changing culture within HE (Barnett and Di Napoli, 2008).

The literature suggests that those teaching HE in FE feel that the dominant cultures of FE such as performativity measures, and the Offices for Standards in Education Children's Services and Skills [Ofsted] requirements are maintained by FE managers when managing HE which affects their relationships with authority in the settings (Feather, 2011). Feather has defined the FE type managerial culture of HE in FE as a 'blame culture' (2016b, p98). He found cynical accounts of dissatisfaction and stressed staff, which were working against

creating a HE culture. Simmons and Lea (2013) found that some colleges were making major commitments to HE and employing staff specifically to manage the HE curriculum and to have representation on senior management teams. Therefore, a blurred picture remains of how HE in FE is managed and experienced within the FECs. Kadi-Hanifi and Elliot (2016) highlight this gap in the literature. They call for more research to consider why some HE in FE lecturers are 'managing to be agents of change for some of the time, rather than mere subjects of bureaucratic managerialism' (2016, p6) and yet others present the views in Feather's study (2016b).

The changes to the hegemonic understanding of professional identity, which historically is related to autonomy, trust and respect has become something that is externally evaluated and measured (Dent and Whitehead, 2002). This strong external control can lead to feelings of lost autonomy. Bernstein (1990) argued that in education where the government or external body has strong control there is strong framing of the curriculum and less control in the classroom for teachers.

The government uses Ofsted to provide frameworks and carry out inspections to ensure standards through these performativity methods, and this includes teaching and learning in FE (Gleeson et al., 2015). This has led to a system of lesson observations and grading in FE learning environments where the 'complexity of the teaching and learning process is superficially reduced to the presentation of quantitative performance data' (Gleeson et al. 2015, p82). Therefore, in gathering data around teaching in FE in relation to teaching HE in FE, these participants will have some idea of how they are graded within the FE system. The creation of such a system 'permeates pedagogy' (Gleeson, et al., 2015, p83) leading to a

situation that forces those on the ground to focus on ticking boxes, accepted methods, particular knowledge and skills, rather than creating capacity for growth and learning.

The degree of autonomy granted to universities is bound with interests of government and state and institutionally subject to the stresses of marketisation (Enders et al. 2013). In the UK, curriculum benchmarks are produced by QAA for guidance in creating comparability of standards across the HE sector (Strathern, 2008). Internal and external quality assurance systems are in place to regulate standards. The HE within the FE settings do not sit outside of these controls (Parry et al. 2012). However, Ashwin suggests that in non-elite universities where programmes have to be commercially viable and often regionally specific there can be a more localised curriculum (2009). HE in FE sits within this non-elite category with its localised offer created in partnership with a HEI. This differs to the FE environment because the curriculum is not controlled by a national awarding body with set criteria, but in partnership with the HEI and, as discussed, these relationships vary. Turner et al. (2009) found that in their sample of twelve participants there were strong feelings of freedom and liberty in their HE in FE lecturing.

### **HE in FE lecturers: background and identity**

Our understanding of those who teach in the marginal space of HE in FE is drawn from a few small scale, yet significant studies (Young, 2002; Burkhill, 2008; Turner et al, 2009; Feather, 2010; Wilson and Wilson, 2011; Kadi-Hanifi and Keenan, 2016). The literature suggests that more studies, like this one, exploring the background and identity of the HE in FE lecturer, will support our understanding of the identity of those in this role and consequential

implications (Kadi-Hanifi and Elliott, 2016). These include, for instance, the way in which lecturers and students interact within the learning environment. In order to understand the intricacies of what takes place it is important to consider how the 'teaching-learning' interaction is 'shaped by processes that might not be visible within the interaction' and this includes considering lecturer identity (Ashwin, 2009, p6).

In this study identity, conceptualised below, is accepted as a complex, fluid, multi-faceted process rather than a singular aspect of the self. In relation to the changing face of identity within HE Watson suggests that 'at some stage in your career you discover who you are and what you can do...this is rarely at the end' (2008, p190). The use of a framework which considers strands of identity, chiefly the background of the lecturer, the day to day self-practices and relations with authority, gives these as central themes for this study. They are drawn from Clarke's 'diagram for teacher 'identity work'' (2009, p191), which this study has adapted for its own use. Here, recent literature drawn from studies on HE in FE, is used to establish the context for these debates.

In their report for QAA Simmons and Lea found 'no clear picture of a typical HE in FE teacher' (2013, p33) which suggests that there is room for further studies, like this one, to support the further understanding of this role. In the six colleges that they focused upon, Simmons and Lea (2013) found that some staff were employed solely to work on HE programmes, but most worked across FE as well as HE in FE. FE in itself is a broad blend of previous professions. The vocational nature of FE programmes means that those teaching in FECs have generally had a vocational past before entry into the FEC (Bathmaker and Avis,

2005; Parry et al. 2012). They have had to go through a process of 'forming and re-forming' as they become a lecturer in the FEC (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005, p48).

Another common aspect of HE in FE lecturers' practice is that they are often still teaching FE, alongside HE, with the lecturers moving between the fields of FE and HE (Young, 2002; Burkhill et al., 2008); these lecturers have brought elements of FE into their roles (Simmons and Lea, 2013; Husband and Jeffrey, 2016). Bathmaker suggests Bourdieu's theories are useful tools to support an analysis of the 'differential positioning of agents in one field compared with another and how such differences may affect individuals' capacity to act in a particular field' (2015, p68). Using Bourdieu, and concepts of habitus and field leads to a consideration of the elements of FE-ness that these individuals carry with them into the HE in FE role. It also allows us to consider which elements of HE these individuals are less likely to bring with them into the role, for instance, the HE cultural capital of experience in academic research and publications, the focus of some studies (Feather, 2010; Creasy, 2013).

There are some contrasting views around the experiences of the practices and views of the HE in FE lecturer (Kadi-Hanifi and Elliott, 2016). Feather (2011; 2016b) finds HE in FE lecturers to be stressed, cynical and doubtful about the practices of HE within FE; whereas Kadi-Hanifi and Keenan, (2016) find a more positive attitude of fulfilment in the practices of the role. The following excerpt suggests that Feather's participants were led to a position of negativity by the questioning: 'On the subject of production operatives, Int. (Interviewee) 8 commented: [laughs loudly]...ooooooooooooohhhhhh I've got a lot of sympathy with that view...' (Feather, 2011, p20). The 'subject of production operatives' was proposed by the



interviewer, which is a leading question and for the interviewee to have 'sympathy with that view' reinforces the concern over this question. Whilst an issue of interviewer influence remains, it is clear that opposing views around the self-practices and relations with authority experienced in the sector need further discussion and this study will contribute to these debates.

### **HE in FE self-practices**

This study is exploring some of the practices, termed here self-practices, of the role of the HE in FE lecturer. There are some common themes within self-practice which are expected in a lecturing role, such as teaching, marking, preparation, administration and supporting students (Young, 2002; Burkhill et al. 2008). There are differences between institutional cultures and between the practices of individuals and groups of individuals. These are according to vocation Lave and Wenger's 'communities of practice' (1991, p98) or according to field in Bourdieusian terms (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). It appears well-established that there are accepted cultural differences of practice between the fields of HE and FE (Simmons and Lea, 2013; Bathmaker, 2015; Husband and Jeffreys, 2016). These differences are not just around the vocational nature of the FE setting as opposed to the research focus in HE, they also include approaches to teaching and the contact time for teaching (Simmons and Lea, 2013).

Most of those teaching HE in FE have an FE background, and bring a range of vocational practices, across a multitude of industries including trades, arts, health and social care, creating variation in prior experience of learning and working (Gleeson et al., 2015). There

is a range of job roles related to teaching in FE including assessor, tutor, lecturer, teacher, trainer and instructor and within these multi-faceted, multi-situated strands of provision lies 'highly segmented and market-tested teaching and learning environments' (Gleeson et al., 2015, p81). Therefore, when the HE in FE literature concludes that the environment is dominated with teaching methods adopted from FE, this is a simplification of a complex environment.

### **Pedagogy, teaching and associated practices**

In one of the earlier of the small studies into HE in FE lecturer identity, Young (2002) found that there was a high degree of commitment to the HE aspect of the role, and there was a greater interest in the teaching aspect of the role than with subject discipline. Young found a 'continuity of teaching approaches from FE' which offered a more intimate, flexible and supported learning environment which the students like (2002, p284). Turner et al. (2009) found that HE in FE lecturer identities remained firmly embedded in teaching. Burkhill et al. (2008) also found that lecturers were bringing past experiences and assumptions to the role from FE around teaching, finding that HE in FE lecturers preferred to maintain established methods rather than take on what they perceived as university HE style teaching.

Evidence suggests that HE in FE lecturing staff view their teaching as different to that in HEIs and are positive about this difference, seeing themselves 'as HE in FE teachers, that is, not FE teachers, but also not strictly HE teachers, but something clearly distinct, and they valued this in their work' (Simmons and Lea, 2013, p37). Caution is needed around the assumptions that the HE in FE lecturers' may hold about teaching in traditional HEIs.

Approaches to teaching in HEIs are affected by the subject discipline and the accepted norms within the disciplines (Lindblom-Ylänne et al., 2006; Ashwin, 2009). The view of traditional 'monologue' lecturing in HEIs is disputed. Not all HE lecturing is teacher-focused and some, particularly on vocational courses, involves small interactive classroom experiences (Biggs, 2003; Sutherland and Badger, 2004). University lecturers also have different approaches amongst themselves in relation to class size and subject base (Lindblom-Ylänne et al. 2006).

Recently, McTaggart (2016) has challenged the accepted view of the satisfied and nurtured students within HE in FE. Her findings are drawn from a Northern Ireland [NI] study, which she argues is similar to other parts of the UK although NI experiences a lack of capacity within HE. McTaggart found a dissatisfied group of learners who felt that several aspects of their experience were poor. The students felt that there was an inconsiderate timetable, with gaps preventing them optimising their part-time work, not enough support for assignments and poor submission planning with clumping of assignment deadlines. This challenges some of the previous studies where lecturers perceive themselves in a positive light (Turner et al. 2009).

There is evidence to show that students who have completed their FD in the FECs have struggled to cope with the transition to the 'top-up' in the HEI. Greenbank (2007) found that foundation degree students topping-up to BA Hons were stressed by the transition from their college setting to the HEI. For instance, they felt that the university lecturers took a more academic approach than the HE in FE lecturers and that they were expected to work more independently than they were used to working in the FE college. Similarly, Pike

and Harrison (2011) found that students perceived that the HEI lecturers had higher expectations, that class sizes were larger and they felt the lecturers did not know them. Despite their anxiety around these different expectations topping-up students appeared to achieve their BA Hons following the transition (Greenbank, 2007).

In a recent small scale study Kadi-Hanifi and Keenan (2016) explored the personal history of five HE in FE lecturers and concluded that lecturer's previous experiences were significant in their approach to the role. They found that the participants' felt that their past experiences gave them a strong work ethic, resilience and a caring stance. This was a small sample so there are limitations on generalisation, but they are not alone in finding a caring interest amongst FE staff. Avis and Bathmaker (2004) also found that caring was important amongst trainee FE teachers and some had significant memories of their own FE experiences which influenced their desire to care. However, Gleeson et al. (2015) report that whilst caring was raised as important, there were limits and too much caring was considered inappropriate. They argue that the marketised nature of the FE environment is actually driving out this aspect of the role in relation to the pastoral care of the student, because it is not linked to funding or a quality measurement.

### **Scholarly activity and research**

Some of the other studies of HE in FE lecturer identity have focused upon the lack of time for scholarly activity and research within FECs (Feather, 2010; Creasy, 2013). Feather (2010) showed in his work that the HE in FE lecturers have a desire to be research active, but workload and lack of time for research made this unachievable. He found that lecturing

staff had high levels of commitment and loyalty towards their students, but little towards the institution and that 'good will' had run thin in terms of giving further time for scholarly activity (2010, p200). The lack of scholarship and research activity amongst HE in FE is considered by some to create a different, second-rate offer coined 'HE-lite' (Creasy, 2013, p38). However, Scott (2010) has argued that HE in FE is employer-led and vocationally-based and that a research driven environment is not necessary for the successful delivery of HE in the FECs.

Whilst importance is placed upon the teaching and learning experience rather than research (Simmons and Lea, 2013) this does not mean that research and scholarly activity are not valued by the HE in FE lecturer. There is evidence within the body of literature of small research projects carried out by HE in FE staff. For instance, articles in the *Research in Post-Compulsory Education* journal are sometimes written by those based in colleges rather than universities. An example is Wilson and Wilson (2011, p475) where A Wilson is listed as the 'Higher Education Research Officer' at his 'college'.

Furthermore, these arguments assume that time for research and scholarly activity is somehow distributed equally within different universities. This is not the case as Watson (2008) illustrates in the differences between types of institution and the balance of interests between research and the curriculum. For some, this is a positive element of the new HE spaces, with the lack of publication pressures in marginal settings allowing 'for the emergence of new, secure, hybridised identities that are not as hampered by the overweening pressure of research productivity' (Clegg, 2008, p13) and the burden of the REF.

## Structure and agency

The structures of society have traditionally been understood as the systems and processes that create, and recreate, social order, with agents as the individuals within society who have agentic ability (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2009). Ashwin argues that in 'teaching-learning interactions' a structural analysis would focus on the situated processes and an agentic analysis would focus on the 'dynamic relations of those involved' (Ashwin, 2009, p26).

However, these concepts of structure and agency have emerged as not being independent of each other, and ultimately they serve to show that aspects of society, such as education, are 'socially constructed in order to serve particular interests' (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2009, p33). Ashwin argues that things can be described in terms of the individuals, as agents, or in terms of other processes or structures; agents are shaped by these 'other processes' which are 'structural-agentic processes' (Ashwin, 2009, p23). A study focusing upon the structures alone would not allow for the shaping done by the individuals, as self-determining agents.

'We have to grasp what I would call the *double involvement* of individuals and institutions: we create society at the same time we are created by it...' (Giddens, 2001, p6).

This study is interested in whether HE in FE is serving a particular interest of the current government, one of society's structures, to widen participation and to reduce the cost of Higher Education, another structure. Indeed, it hopes ultimately to contribute to such wider debates. However, it is exploring a detailed level of lived experience and focuses upon the individuals, the agents, who teach on these programmes. It considers their identity and views, looking for the potential impact of this small shift in the delivery of HE at a micro-level. Here the participants are centrally placed so that their agentic processes can be

explored in relation to the formation of their identity and the context of the structures of HE in FE. This becomes central to the learning environment for the students; the student is also an agent within the structure of the learning environment.

Theories of individualization have supported the view that individuals go through a self-defining process dependent on levels of reflexivity (Elliott and du Gay 2009). Thus, the agent is reflexive and consequently able to alter themselves, in the negotiated positioning of identity (Giddens, 1991). A process of adaptation and posturing takes place in order to maintain a viable position within the multiple realities of personal experience and society (Dent and Whitehead, 2002). Significantly for this study, these political and ethical struggles with the self and others create discourses which reinforce ways of living out the reality of one's life and the potential limitations and freedoms for self-reflexivity imposed by others, but also by the self (Clarke, 2008; Clarke, 2009).

## **Identity**

Understanding identity is important for sense-making of the hierarchies that exist in our social world, including HE, and the 'relationality' between these (Lawler, 2014, p147).

Identity is neither singular nor static: 'the self is more aptly described as fragmented, saturated and diversely populated by identities that are imputed by the social world' (Deci and Ryan, 2002, p4). Changes within society, such as globalisation and the neo-liberal agenda, influence our views and experiences on, for instance, gender, race, education and occupation and pull at our interpretation and positioning of the self. Scholars attempt to

understand aspects of identity and the nature of being, and motivation, within contexts and on varying levels (Deci and Ryan, 2002).

If identity is measured in differences it can create uncertainty and prejudice (Clarke, 2008).

Lawler warns against trying to give an 'overarching definition ... because what identity means depends on how it is thought about' (Lawler, 2014, p7). Defining our identity by comparison to others can lead to racism, sexism and elitism; a 'them and us' approach which leads to the 'denigration of the other and the idealisation of the us' (Clarke, 2008, p527). Here, identity is conceptualised in relation to the lecturer's personal background, professional self-practices and relations with authority and these form the super-ordinate themes of the research. These super-ordinate themes are derived from Clarke's Foucauldian based 'diagram for doing 'identity work'' (2009, p191). It also locates individuals in relation to background and it looks to the detail of how they live out their life and the way in which beliefs and practices are created in these spaces.

### **Using theorists to support this identity study**

In theorising the way in which the patterns of inequality are perpetuated through structures, it is useful to consider Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital and field. Bourdieu's view of education placed it as a structure at the centre of society and the reproduction of class, inequality and privilege (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). He argued that the whole of the education system was set up to maintain the reproduction of the differences between the classes: 'by the means of the institution it has to produce and reproduce...' and therefore 'contributes to the reproduction of the relations between the



groups or classes (social reproduction)' (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, p54). For Bourdieu, individuals or agents inhabit social worlds that are the products of a collective history, which forms their habitus, and they recreate or perpetuate the seemingly objective structures of society termed fields.

Bourdieu argued that this happens because the teacher teaches what they have previously learnt and so the pedagogy is reproduced. This he argued is particularly evident when 'agents responsible for inculcation possess pedagogic principles only in implicit form, having acquired them unconsciously through prolonged frequentation of masters who had themselves mastered them only in practical form' (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, p63).

Others have used these elements of Bourdieu's theorising to understand similarities in the way in which people behave within occupations, for instance, medicine, teaching or law, as part of the self-perpetuating system whereby understanding is 'socially negotiated' in 'communities of practice' (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p50). These theories are useful in understanding HE and the way that learning interactions take place between lecturers and students (Ashwin, 2009).

Here, the significant aspect of lecturer identity, within HE in FE, is explored in order to enhance the understanding of this recent, expanding HE space. The need to understand this option for these particular students is important because of the potential for reinforcing differences between social groups rather than breaking boundaries and enabling social mobility, by maintaining the hierarchy of institutions (Clegg, 2011; Bathmaker, 2016). The 'sub-field' or 'hybridised' field of HE in FE is not fully understood because it is in the 'flaky borderlands' where rules and practices from one field spill into the other (Bathmaker, 2015,

p68 and p72). Students and the staff position themselves in these new spaces or fields where 'taken-for-granted' practices and rules of the differing fields appear to be crossing boundaries (Bathmaker, 2015, p72).

In this study, the structures of the sub-field of HE in FE, such as the availability of courses and institutional factors are important, but they are not the main focus. Whilst the analysis includes the background and personal history of the lecturers, this is discussed in relation to the HE in FE lecturer's positioning and their ability to manipulate and potentially change or to reproduce their realities and discourses. The focus here is upon the detailed behaviour of the individual and rather than utilise Bourdieu's tools for the analysis, this study draws upon social constructionists such as Clarke (2009), who have used Foucault's theorising specifically to understand teacher identity formation from a social constructionist perspective.

Clarke focuses upon teacher identity and argues that the way in which teachers develop or 'become' is important. He argues that this is determined by who teachers are, the 'very mode' of their 'being' (2009, p186). Through his work, Clarke hopes to offer those in education useful strategies for understanding and improving how teachers develop or 'become' so that they optimise their development. However, he finds attempting to understand identity problematic, because identity is not easy for individuals to conceptualise. The paradoxical nature of identity means that people cannot easily reflect upon their own identity, nor can they easily recognise their own agentic possibilities and limitations. Clarke conceptualises identity as the 'inescapable and ongoing process of discussion, explanation, negotiation, argumentations and justification that partly comprises

teacher's lives and practices' (2009. P187). Clarke turns to Foucault's work on ethical identity formation to theorise the ways in which teachers develop their identity. His methods are useful to this study and are discussed further in the methodology chapter.

Clarke is not alone in finding Foucault useful; Ball argues that Foucault offers a refreshing and unique perspective for understanding education, which leads him to 'question what I do as a scholar and social critic, and ethically who I am and what I might become' (2013, p3). Foucault's texts are difficult to understand, and he was confused and disconcerted by his own writing (Ball, 2013, p11). Ball finds that there is a 'sense in which everything he wrote is a set of preludes to something that remains to be written...' (p17). Those who have used Foucault's 'preludes' for studying educational identities offer something very useful for this study.

Therefore, Foucault is used here on a meta level, in so much as aspects of the methodology and analysis are based on the works of others who have used Foucault's theorising in their work (Infinito, 2003a, 2003b; Clarke, 2009). Their theorising is used to explore teacher's individual ethical struggles in making choices. 'The problem for Foucault is to produce and maintain individual freedom that, in the end, requires acting ethically with others' (Infinito, 2003b, p70). So, a person can free themselves from their limitations, but this creates ethical struggles on a personal level (Infinito 2003b). Marshall argued that Foucault's 'philosophical project is to investigate the ways in which discourses and practices have transformed human beings into subjects of a particular kind' (Marshall, 1990, p14). If the HE, that HE in FE creates is something different then there is an implication for, not just the identity of the

lecturer in such a setting, but for the students on these programmes for 'that who I am affects another's self-construction' (Infinito, 2003b, p156).

Fundamental to the use of the Foucauldian influenced social constructionists, is to recognise the way in which they use the term 'ethics'. Clarke uses the term 'ethico-political' to describe these personal struggles because individuals are making ethical decisions within the 'political' environment of the educational setting (2009, p185). These struggles create a situation where identity is reinforced through behaviours that are constrained by the individual and by authority sources. This is ethical self-construction (Infinito, 2003a) and theorising this process helps in 'problematizing human identity [ ] specifically freedom to become' and this is important because who we become, affects others (Infinito, 2003a, p155). This links to the debates on social mobility and the emergent identity of the students who take this HE in FE route.

It is a way of conceptualising internalised moral struggles that form part of the creation of the self rather than necessarily being about caring for others; although caring about others is one of the aspects of caring for the self (Prado, 2003). In the process of caring for the self through ethics the person tries to become better –this is a subjective stance- and this involves making choices and decisions which are difficult and have conflicting outcomes (Prado, 2003, p203). These ethical choices are linked to politics; in professional identity they are the politics of the workplace.

In his study on teacher identity, which focuses largely on his research methods, Clarke (2009) uses an example of a student teacher's perspective. He demonstrates how the

individual limited possibilities through their choice of language and long-established views, closing down reflective opportunities and taking traditional stances. Clarke's aim is to try and free the teacher from thoughts that limit their actions; he wants individuals to recognise the 'discursive constructedness of thinking' (2009, p194). This would enable them to develop their ethical stance and become teachers free from the limitations of their own history. Clarke suggests that teachers should conduct what Foucault termed a 'historical ontology of ourselves' (2009, p194). To do this the teacher (or lecturer) has to recognise their own history and realise that they can break free from it, but it is difficult because there is security in maintaining the safety of established ways of thinking. Clarke argues that individuals are more free than they realise and the process therefore, is both 'liberating' and 'daunting' and it is ongoing with constant renegotiating (2009, p194). The teaching approaches of teachers is one aspect of their identity which would be challenged as 'pedagogical certainties might be transformed by encounters with others' (2009, P194). Clarke's essence of identity work is that it is a transformative process, with personal ethical stances being challenged. Paradoxically, Clarke maintains that he is not trying to suggest that there is a right or wrong way to be a teacher per se; the point is that the individual needs to recognise why they think how they think and open possibilities for change.

Infinito, whose focus is particularly on developing racial awareness and challenging prejudice, sees this process of internal conflict as the crux of finding the freedom to change: 'who one is and who one might become are produced mainly out of one's struggles' (2003b, p75). This is the internal ethical or ethico-political process that leads to freedom. So for Infinito, this is teaching his students to explore other positions in order to leave behind the

position that they have already established. These struggles are the inner tensions as individuals try to become free from what they hold to be true.

The theories and methods of these social constructionists are important in this study because they also offer guidance on how to analyse the interview data in relation to the nuanced positioning that participants engage in. In this study, people's choices, their positioning and manipulation of representations of the self are considered in relation to the HE in FE lecturer's role. Work by Goffman, on how people present themselves in daily life and how they cope with hiding certain aspects, highlighted the need for individuals to manage aspects of their identity and to negotiate ways of presenting or concealing detail on a sometimes micro-level from society at large (1956 and 1963). This included controlling the information revealed about oneself on membership of groups, sexuality, personal health and profession (1963). There are metaphoric public and private front and back stage worlds that people inhabit and negotiate between the two (Goffman, 1956). Within these are the regions of interaction, where there are power struggles with, as Jenkins observed, Foucault's ethical and political implications, at the micro-level (2008). This is significant for this study which looks closely at these individual struggles in the HE in FE region of interaction.

### **Motivation and autonomy**

Motivation was defined by Maslow in relation to a hierarchy of needs which analysed the most basic human instincts through to desires for 'secondary or cultural drives' such as

material goods, prestige and praise, culminating in a state of 'self-actualisation' where people develop healthy, creative, autonomous minds (Maslow, 1987, p4 and pxxvi).

There are extrinsic and intrinsic motivators and understanding how this affects individual drive or desire are key areas for psychologists trying to understand behaviour (Deci and Ryan, 2002). 'Intrinsic motivation is the innate, natural propensity to engage one's interests and exercise one's capacities' (Deci and Ryan, 1985, p43). Deci and Ryan put forward the argument that intrinsic motivation is about self-determination, which though similar to self-actualisation, requires 'the capacity to choose and to have choices' (1985, p38). This means that there are some behaviours which are not chosen but are 'control-determined' which would include, for instance, a student studying because they were told they had to (Deci and Ryan, 1985, p155). They argue that this is not a choice and therefore not self-determined whereas a genuine choice allows for a person to 'flow freely in his or her actions' which requires flexibility and creates autonomous behaviour (Deci and Ryan, 1985, p155). They argue that people have orientations towards 'autonomy', 'control' and the 'impersonal' with varying degrees of each of these within an individual, and within environments.

Autonomy was mentioned earlier in relation to institutional autonomy and management. This is relevant because the environment has an effect on the motivation of those within. A motivational environment is 'informational' without being over-controlling (Deci and Ryan, 1985, p162). This allows people to make decisions within environments that have extrinsic controls, but allow choice and support the development of resilience and maintain intrinsic motivation. In highly controlling environments, people lose intrinsic motivation. People

experience pressure as 'a conflict or power struggle between the controller and the controlled' (Deci and Ryan, 1985, p157) which could be between people, organisations or a personal struggle with oneself, resonating with social constructionist theorising where ethical self-formation takes place through a series of struggles (Infinite, 2003a). Overly controlling environments lead to an 'impersonal orientation' where lack of purpose leads to self-defeating behaviours such as addiction, low self-worth and helplessness (Deci and Ryan, 1985, p160). There is not always conflict suffered by those who are without choice, some do not enter a position of opposition and are compliant or suppressed. This can lead to inner tensions where individuals 'accommodate' the situation, but this is not 'the choiceful or healthy accommodation of autonomy orientation' (Deci and Ryan, 1985, p159).

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter the literature around academic identities was explored. This showed that academic identities are contested and have moved from some of the traditional notions (Clegg, 2008). These changes are part of the changes in the broader HE landscape (Barnett and Di Napoli, 2008). This has opened opportunities for non-traditional lecturers and for environments where there is less pressure to publish (Eveline, 2005; Clegg, 2008). These new spaces in the sector margins need further analysis and part of this is to better understand the identity of those within the spaces (Clegg, 2008).

It is clear that HE in FE is established across the UK (Parry et al. 2012; Simmons and Lea, 2013). Partnerships with HEIs are driven by financial interests, although FECs enjoy the aspirational aspects that HE offers in their settings (Dhillon and Bentley, 2016).



Management and cultural norms are dominated by the FE context and this causes unrest in some accounts (Feather, 2010; 2016b). The lack of scholarly activity and a research environment is criticised as detrimental for the staff and for the HE-ness of the student environment (Feather; 2012; Creasy, 2013). There is concern around the notion that the offer of HE in FE may create more verticality in the hierarchical system of HE, polarising the elite from the widening participation groups (Clegg, 2011; Avis and Orr, 2016; Bathmaker, 2016). Notions of social mobility are challenged and ultimately social justice may not be addressed through HE in FE, because statistics show that graduates do not achieve salaries in line with traditional HEI graduates (Avis and Orr, 2016; Bathmaker, 2016).

Those teaching in the settings appear to have largely positive views of their teaching and purposefully use FE methods (Young, 2002; Burkhill et al. 2008; Turner et al 2009; Wilson and Wilson, 2011). They also feel that supporting their students and caring is important (Kadi-Hanifi and Keenan, 2016). Studies suggest that there is a mixed view from students with some finding students feel supported, but some groups feel that their offer is poor (McTaggart, 2016). Students can find it challenging to transfer to top-up programmes in traditional HEIs due to the higher levels of support that they received in the colleges (Greenbank, 2007). There is a general acceptance that there is not enough time to carry out research and scholarly activity (Feather, 2010). There is a call for better consideration of this and potentially new models which place higher value on vocational skills, suggesting this environment has much to offer given redefinition and investment (Bathmaker, 2016; Husband and Jeffreys, 2016).

Notions of identity are situated and fluid (Lawler, 2014). Identity is a process of becoming (Britzman, 1991) and something achieved through ethical and political struggles that create second level discourses (Foucault, 1982; Infinito, 203a; Clarke, 2009). Individuals are subject to their past and education systems are socially reproductive (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). However, individuals have reflexivity (Giddens, 1991) and manipulate identity for their own purpose between their social worlds (Goffman, 1956; Jenkins, 2008). Individuals are motivated to varying degrees and their levels of self-determination are linked to autonomy and the type of environment (Deci and Ryan, 1985).

This study sits within a post-structuralist paradigm, using social constructionist theorising in particular. It takes a phenomenological approach, which is particularly useful for exploring lived experiences, and these are used to explore identity. The creation of 'truths about the world which the discursive subject then takes up both as a means of identity validation and as a form of ontological location' is important because it perpetuates or creates the 'discourse' (Dent and Whitehead, 2002, p10). This requires acceptance of the possibility that it is not enough to think that people 'become' but that 'our identities are thus partly given yet they are also something that has to be achieved, offering a potential site of agency within the inevitably social process of becoming' (Clarke, 2009, p187).

This study contributes to our understanding of how individuals became HE in FE lecturers and how they continue to define the role through their behaviours. Understanding how this takes place on a micro-level for the FE in HE lecturer will support the detailed understanding of this marginal yet growing space. The use of the social constructionist approach, focusing on the detail of experience and relationships, requires a suitable

methodological process that orders and stages a reliable research design. This is explored in the following chapter.

## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

This chapter establishes the methodology for this study which is rooted in the qualitative paradigm and uses phenomenology methods. The guiding theoretical framework is established along with the formulation of the research questions, the data collection questions and subsequent analysis. These are the hierarchy of necessary concepts outlined by Punch (2009). The ethical implications, the practicalities of the data gathering process and personal assumptions are also explored in this chapter.

The overarching aim of the study is to explore the identity of the HE in FE lecturer. This study considers the following research questions:

- 1 How is being a HE in FE lecturer located within the individual's background?
- 2 How does the individual experience the HE in FE role, in terms of individual self-practice and relationships with authority?
- 3 How does the identity of the HE in FE lecturer impact on their pedagogical practice?

### **Overview**

This study seeks to create a valid analysis which could be useful for others with an interest in HE in FE, and lecturer identity. To give validity to the study there was a process of creating the development of a repeatable research design, using selected techniques and a framework to give structural rigour. This was developed during the pilot study, which highlighted areas that could have limited validity, such as personal assumptions based on

personal experience. The methodology for this study offers a process that could be reproduced for other similar studies, and it aims to avoid the reproduction of personal assumptions. It is deeply rooted in the qualitative paradigm and sits within the theoretical bounds of social constructionism, which is interested in the 'dynamics of social interaction' (Burr, 2015, p11). The ontology or nature of reality is based upon the preposition that there are second-level discourses beyond a literal level of language. This type of discourse 'is understood to be a body of knowledge (a way of understanding), and these bodies of knowledge are held to be constitutive that is they shape and constrain ways of understanding a topic or experience.' (Smith et al. 2009, p44).

The methodology is based on Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis [IPA], a qualitative phenomenology methodology which is derived from the discipline of psychology. Previously psychology drew data from large quantitative studies and the development of IPA gave credence to qualitative psychology studies (Smith et al. 2009). It offered a structure which incorporates phenomenology, hermeneutics and ideography. This methodology is essentially very similar to traditional phenomenological methods. Its application has now gone beyond psychology and is increasingly recognised as useful to the social sciences (Smith, et al. 2009).

The use of IPA, specifically the guidance put forward by Smith et al. (2009), gives a rigorous structure to the processes required to create a valid and reliable methodology with guidance for sampling, creating questions, interviewing, analysis and presentation of results. This is appropriate for a study that explores individual experiences and identity where the

researcher investigates through a process of gathering narrative information which is analysed to illuminate human experience (Larkin et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2009).

This study seeks to make meaning from the experiences of the individual and identity formation, with particular reference to lecturing and therefore it also draws upon the work developed by Clarke (2009, p191) who produced a 'diagram' to guide teacher identity studies. These two elements work well together as they are both based on exploring lived experience as perceived by the individual participant and fit well with social constructionism. The framework gives super-ordinate themes to the study and as expected in IPA methodology, sub-themes emerge from the data through deduction within the analysis process, and this is explored below.

The pilot study (McGhie, 2011), conducted as part of the planning process for the main thesis, found that the importance of individual background was significant. Bourdieu's theories are considered in the construction of the research design, with the inclusion of a questionnaire and interview questions around participant's background in relation to their early experiences of education and parental influence.

## **Phenomenology**

The qualitative methodology for this study utilises a phenomenological approach. In order to give rigour to the processes, the guidelines established by Smith et al. (2009) for Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis [IPA] were particularly useful in offering a clearly defined approach to the study. IPA combines the three key aspects of phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Larkin et al., 2006; Smith et al. 2009).

Phenomenology supports our understanding of how people experience things and has been utilised in key studies of identity (Van Manen, 1990). It is considered to be 'the person in context approach' (Larking et al., 2006, p106). Phenomenology developed as a philosophical concept in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by four key figures. The first was Husserl (1970) who was interested in the essence of how things are experienced; for example, what makes a house and how do people understand 'houseness'? In order to know how 'houseness' is experienced the researcher must acknowledge and 'bracket' their own experience (Smith et al. 2009, p11). The type of housing experienced by the researcher would influence the understanding of houseness and therefore this must be acknowledged. It is for this reason that Chapter One contained my personal reflection. It showed my understanding and experience of HE in FE and located me in relation to the study. This supported my own understanding and helps others to understand how my views may be coloured by my experience. Heidegger (1962), a student of Husserl, developed these concepts and focused upon the practical experiences of being human, the person in context, to try and address the 'ontological question of existence itself' (Smith et al. 2009, p11). This might involve exploring a common emotion, through experiences, such as love, which Larkin et al. demonstrate (2006).

Merleau-Ponty recognised that there were multi-levels of experience that should be considered, for instance the person experiencing grief and the person who experiences somebody else's grief (Smith et al., 2009). Sartre further developed the existential focus through a series of essays (1943) and argued that the self is a process, an ongoing project,

and that people become who they are throughout life, which is a significant concept for teacher identity studies (Clarke, 2009).

In Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis, there is not necessarily a hypothesis to be tested (Larkin et al., 2006). It is a process of the researcher trying to make meaning of the experiences of others and interpret this with themes emerging from the research (Larkin et al., 2006). In this study, a framework, explored below, offers super-ordinate themes in order to structure the interviews and the analysis. This is not a requirement of IPA, but given the small scale and time frames it was used to guide the analysis within a particular social constructionist view of identity. An aspect of IPA is that it is not a limitation to the research process, but offers 'prompts' (Larkin et al., 2006, p117). A significant part of IPA is the interpretive quality. This allows the researcher to go beyond the descriptive value of what is said and add an interpretation, this makes for analysis rather than description (Larkin et al., 2006). Given that the interviews become transcripts this is done with the use of hermeneutics to analyse the text created following the gathering of the phenomenological data. Hermeneutics is a long-established method originating from the study of biblical and historical texts (Smith et al. 2009). The process of understanding the text has to acknowledge that there is a grammatical and psychological interpretation, that the analyst's own experience is significant in the interpretation. There is the 'hermeneutic circle' of understanding the 'part' and the 'whole' which is a reflective process of moving to and from the part and the whole (Smith et al., 2009, p28).

In the hermeneutic analysis what is said is not always taken at face value, but interpreted in relation to what is meant by what is said. The analyst must engage with the text to



understand their own assumptions and viewpoint. The process of interpretation reveals the researcher's preconceptions and there is a two-way process as the interpreter and the text engage in a dialogue. The analyst finds what they 'bring to the text and what the text brings to us' (Smith et al. 2009, p 26). Therefore, there is the double process of the researcher making sense of themselves and of their experiences as well as interpreting how the participant makes sense of their experiences. On reflection, the process of making sense and understanding my own assumptions and preconceptions was enlightened through the double hermeneutic process, and this is explored in the concluding chapter.

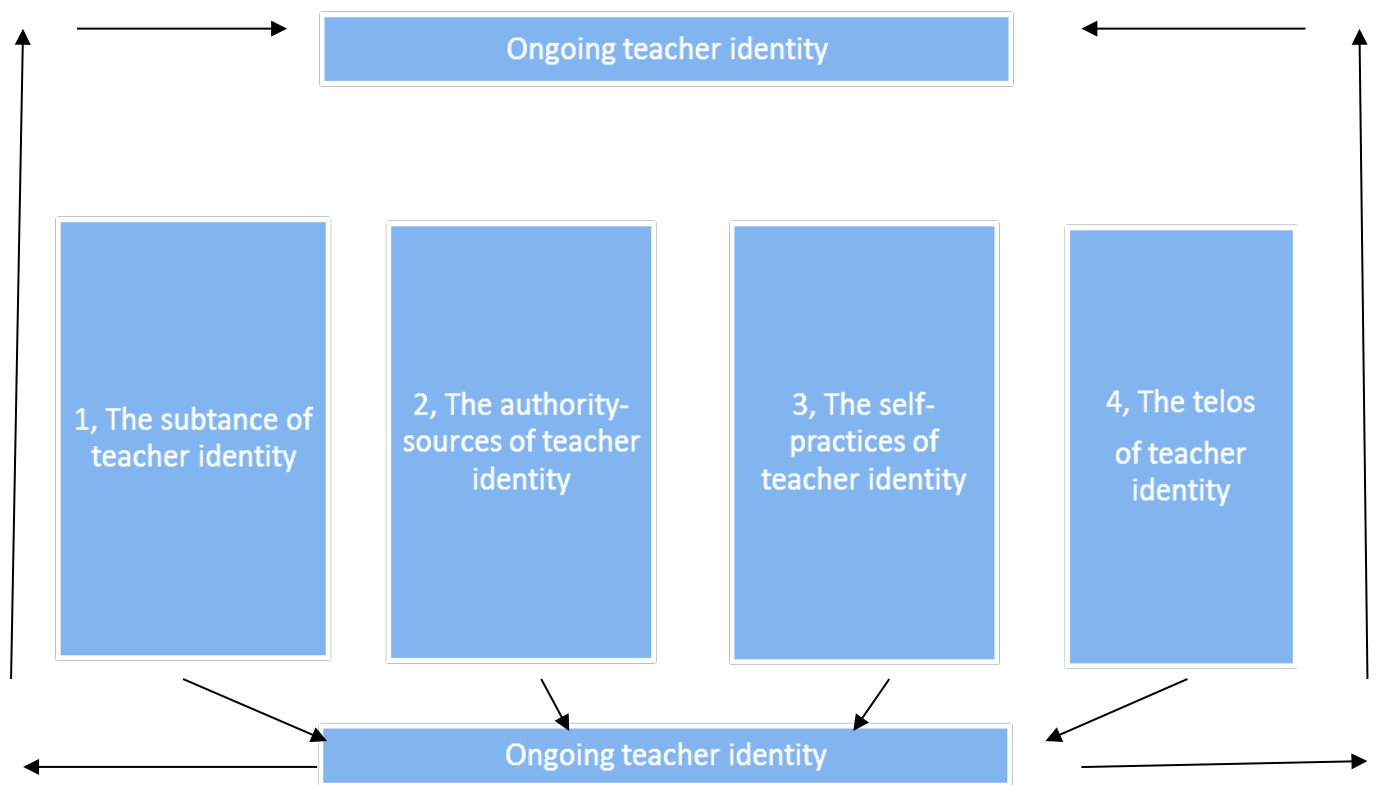
Another significant aspect of IPA is idiography which looks for detail through in-depth analysis of 'particular people' in 'particular contexts'; this is the idiographic (Smith et al. 2009 p29). Thus, the interest is in the particular rather than the nomothetic and the detail of experiences rather than generalised descriptions. This methodology was developed within psychology because many psychological studies have looked to produce aggregated statistical understanding of ways of being or behaviour. Sometimes these are based on laboratory experiments, including animals (Deci and Ryan, 1985). The development of IPA gave rigour to smaller qualitative studies based on human experiences within psychology (Smith et al. 2009).

The aim of the idiographic study is to show detail in the accounts of experience and whilst these do not make for wider generalisations, 'there is considerable ground for the development of phenomenologically informed models for the synthesis of multiple analyses from small studies and single cases' (Smith et al. 2009, p32). The social sciences have used qualitative methods for many years, including phenomenology, and the use of IPA does not

differ greatly other than to provide further rigour and guidance. This was very useful for framing the processes required and supporting the creation of a repeatable methodology for further similar studies adding validity to this study.

### **The development of a framework for the study**

With these theoretical approaches in mind, a pilot study of four participants, offered the opportunity to try out a method for exploring the HE in FE lecturer's experiences (McGhie, 2011). The outcomes were used to inform the design of the data gathering process and analysis for the main study. The pilot study used Clarke's (2009) framework which he developed for his teacher identity study. He produced a 'diagram for doing 'identity work'' which is a 'diagram of elements that combine to produce identity' which he offered as a potential framework for others to adapt to their own use (Clarke, 2009, p191). This was based on Foucault's (1983) 'four aspects of the relationship to oneself', (Clarke, 2009, p190) shown in Figure 1. This framework helped guide the questions by providing super-ordinate themes which would allow for sub-themes to be deduced from the analysis, as expected in phenomenology (Smith et al. 2009). The IPA methodology and the framework worked well together because they both fit with social constructionist approaches where reality is created within language and discourses. The pilot attempted to consider the four aspects or axes of the relationship to oneself which are 'the substance of ethics, the authority sources of ethics, the self-practices, and the telos, or endpoint' (Clarke, 2009, p190).



**Figure 1. After Clarke's 'Diagram for doing identity work' Clarke (2009, p191).**

This framework was adapted for the pilot to consider the same aspects but for HE in FE lecturers: the substance of teacher identity considers 'how teaching [HE in FE lecturing] and being a teacher [HE in FE lecturer] relates to other parts of my being'. The second axis, authority sources, considers 'subjection, referring to the issues of why I should cultivate certain attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, and what sources of authority I recognise as a teacher [HE in FE lecturer]'. The third axis 'concerns the techniques and practices we use to fashion and shape our teaching [HE in FE lecturing] selves'. The fourth axis 'concerns the telos or endpoint of our teaching [HE in FE lecturing] selves' (all cited from Clarke, 2009, p191).

Thus, the pilot study tested whether the questions, within the interview structure, could produce a set of responses that explore these issues and create valid results. The questions were explored through four semi-structured in-depth interviews. Following analysis of the pilot, it became clear that clarification and follow-up probing questions needed to be modified. The research questions for the thesis needed to further consider the importance of, for instance, how individuals came to be in the role and to consider how they felt in relation to their view on their own future. Therefore, a new framework was developed for the main study that changed the super-ordinate themes. The emerging themes were useful in informing the design of the questions for the main study.

| Substance  | Self-practices  | Authority sources  | Endpoint  |
|--|---|--|---|
| Background<br>Point in own career<br>Falling into role | Teaching<br>Preparation<br>Administration<br>CPD<br>Qualifications<br>Publications<br>Updating practice and skills<br>Student centred | Policy incl. terms and conditions<br>Business pressures<br>Management<br>Finance | Intrinsic pleasure from teaching<br>Knowing own strengths<br>Returning to practice<br>original vocation |

**Figure 2. Table to show themes that emerged from the analysis of the pilot interviews.**

The pilot analysis showed that some of the questions were based on my personal assumptions even though the framework was guiding the process. This fits with the hermeneutic theory that the preconceptions of the researcher become apparent during engagement with the text and that a double hermeneutic occurs (Smith et al. 2009). For instance, on asking whether they aspired to teach HE in FE, the participants' responses showed that it was more complex and that their aspirations were tied to other factors. For

instance, HE in FE had, for some, not existed at the outset of their careers, and for two people it was something they described as ‘falling’ into. There was little suggestion that it was an aspiration and yet my personal assumption and my own aspirations (discussed in the personal reflection in chapter one) had led me to think this would be a clear cut ambition for participants. This pilot process allowed me to ‘bracket’ this view and to redesign the main study to minimize the impact of this assumption, to free myself from what I was ‘silently thinking’ (Infinito, 2003b). This improves the reliability of the data gathered as it reduces the leading nature of questioning which could occur.

The participants in the pilot showed that they were at different stages of becoming (HE in FE lecturers) and this exerted influence on how they responded to questions about their role. Aspects of their background were not fully captured in the data. It became clear that the focus should be upon the individual’s relationship with themselves, notwithstanding wider external forces or structures, but that ‘themselves’ was also about their history and background, about their view of the future and levels of confidence or self-doubt. Ashwin (2009) called for a more detailed nuance of the lecturer’s background and career to date in order to understand their identity and links with teaching and learning interactions. Day and Gu (2010) showed that the stage in the lifecycle and the number of years spent in teaching, were important factors in teacher attitude, identity, and effectiveness.

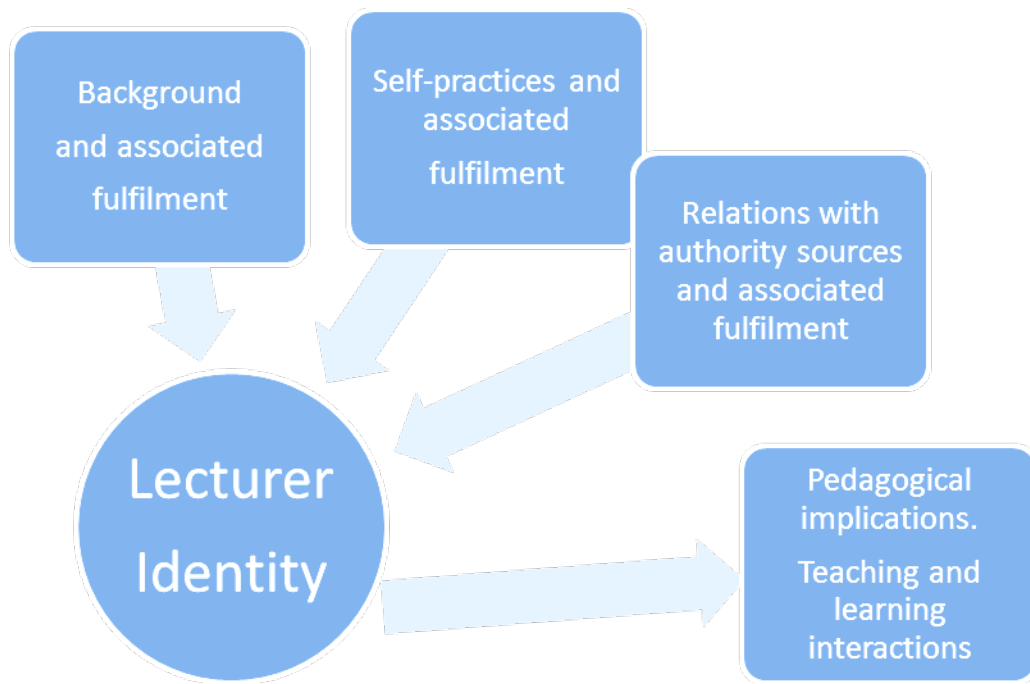
Therefore, methodological approach in this study involved a reinterpretation of elements of Clarke’s diagram. Whilst maintaining some of the structure and terminology that were useful, it used a wider interpretation of ‘the relationship to oneself’ and the ‘substance of teacher identity’ with a more explicit consideration of the other elements and forces at

work in individual's lives. The language for the super-ordinate themes was changed from 'the substance of teacher identity' by which Clarke meant 'what parts of myself pertains to teaching and what forms of subjectivity constitute or what forms do I use to constitute my teaching self?' It was adapted to relate more to themes around background, their perception of the role, their perception of other's views of the role and emotional responses in relation to this. The pilot suggested that, in planning the main study, questions on background should be given more importance and made more explicit in order to ensure the capture of, for instance, parental education. This was so evident that the use of a questionnaire to capture this data was included in the main study.

The notion of telos or endpoints of the HE in FE lecturing role as a separate category was also changed. This was due to the superficial or detached nature of the results in the pilot around establishing these motivational and fulfilling aspects of the role separately to the elements of the three key areas of background, self-practices and relations with authority. Clarke argues that the fulfilment of the role of teaching may involve asking "what do you enjoy about your job?" could illicit answers such as "making a difference" (Clarke, 2009, p191). However, this could be said of many jobs, from being a retail assistant to nursing. By looking for fulfilments within the axes of the diagram, through the hermeneutic processes, the results proved more enlightening. In the first instance it was assumed that fulfilment would be found just within the areas of self-practices. However, it emerged that emotional responses around fulfilment in the role were as entwined in the background of the participants as much as in their self-practices.

Consequently, the first 'box' of the diagram was changed to background and associated fulfilments and the first research question was revised to ask: how is being a HE in FE lecturer located within background, career history and aspirations. To ensure that there was consistency in the type of data collected on the background of the participant the questionnaire was developed for the main study to complement the interview data. The second axis of the diagram suggests an exploration of aspects of self-practice and fulfilments. The pilot showed that self-practices includes for example teaching, planning, supporting students, scholarly activity and marking which all emerged as sub-themes. The third axis of the diagram explores power through relations with authority sources and associated fulfilments. Authority can be interpreted as relationships with line managers or external forces such as legislation, and with students and their demands or needs as a force on the lecturer. The use of IPA meant that from these super-ordinate themes further themes were deduced, for instance around autonomy, manipulation and links with their own WP background.

This study takes the social constructionist view that practices have created 'subjects of a particular kind' so they will carry out their role in particular ways, and this will affect those who are taught by them (Marshall, 90, p14). Fundamental to the study is consideration of the question whether the identity of the HE in FE lecturer has implications for pedagogical practice or teaching and learning interactions. The consideration of attitudes towards pedagogy and the student experience as a result of the background, self-practices and relations with authority and associated fulfilments, meant that, for this study, pedagogy was given a place in the new framework as an outcome of identity, as shown in Figure 3 below.



**Figure 3. An adapted framework for the main thesis**

## **Ethics**

Ethical consideration of all elements of the data gathering and analysis processes were approved by the home institution for this study (Keele University) and this approval is shown in Appendix 1. Permissions were considered on three levels: the institution supervising the study, the individuals taking part and the institutions to which they belonged (Cresswell and Plano-Clark 2007). The process of gaining ethical approval supported the process of ensuring that appropriate procedures regarding permissions at all levels were followed. It was established that as the interviews were about individual experiences and not linked to particular institutions, or about the institution itself, that approval from other institutions was not needed.



A letter inviting participants to take part, an information sheet, and consent forms, shown in Appendices 2-4, were all checked and approved prior to use by the ethics committee of the home institution. The questions for the questionnaire, shown in appendix 5, and the semi-structured interviews were thoroughly developed with open-endedness, confidentiality, and minimum risk or harm in mind. These questions were also checked as part of the ethical approval process. Participants were given an information sheet outlining the purposes of the study, my personal background, assurances of anonymity and confidentiality, including from others in the study, and prompted to consider that such reflections may create emotional responses that they had not expected. They were told about the questionnaire, the interview length, the follow-up phone call and the procedures around transcription and data storage. Researcher personal protection was also considered and a University email address, letter heads and a non-private telephone number were used in order to protect personal privacy and safety. The interviews were conducted in private spaces within public locations (e.g. a classroom within the college) during 2012 and 2013.

From a professional aspect, it was not possible to ensure that associations with individuals would not occur in the future, and I assured candidates again verbally at the start of the interviews that no matter what was said, it would not be raised or referred to again by me in the future, should we work together at any point. There remains the possibility that the participants themselves could refer to events within the study in the future. To protect identities, all of the participants were given pseudonyms and none were aware of their own or others' pseudonyms or of the identity of the other colleges where participants worked.

The snowballing method of purposive sampling, explained below, meant that participants were aware of who passed the details on to me. The referring parties were unaware of whether interviews did subsequently take place unless they discussed this independently at a later date. The interviews were recorded on a digital recorder and later transferred to a file on a computer protected by encryption and passwords; the recordings were removed from the digital recorder. Names of colleges, colleagues, locations and any other material that might lead to the identification of an individual is omitted from text samples and quotes in order to protect identities.

### **Sampling**

The use of IPA as the guiding methodology supported the development of the research design in terms of sampling, data collection and analysis. The idiographic approach of IPA, meant that the sampling was small, purposive and from a homogenous group (Smith et al. 2009). Participants needed to have experience of working in FE settings and to be either currently teaching on HE programmes within that setting or to have done so recently. Cresswell and Plano-Clark (2007) put forward several ways of doing this, including purposefully choosing people who hold different perspectives such as gender or race or choosing extreme cases such as troubled situations. This study, does not look to make generalisations on particular perspectives such as gender or race nor was the intention to study extreme examples. The sample for the main study included a gender mix of nine women and four men.

Therefore, the sample was 'homogenous' as participants belonged to the sub-group of staff in FE settings who teach on HE programmes, from a range of settings across a range of programme areas. As a qualitative IPA study, it was not necessary to generalise in order to create a statistical analysis, such as the percentage of the sub-group of HE in FE lecturers who feel that they have enough or not enough time to prepare for their teaching. Smith et al. (2009) outline acceptable numbers for different levels of academic study including Master's level and PhDs, and recommend between four and ten interviews for Professional Doctorates, of around 45 to 90 minutes each. This study has 13 participants in the main sample which excludes the pilot study. This ensured that as themes arose from the data there were enough participants to see similarities and differences yet remain very familiar with the detail of the individual. Consequently, in relation to data saturation and validity, this study falls within suggested guidelines for such qualitative IPA based studies.

Finding members of the sub-group of HE in FE lecturers was more difficult than first anticipated as my four main contacts, gained through professional networks, were used in the pilot study. So, the 'referral' method was used (Smith et al, 2009); this was done by asking a former acquaintance from the pilot study, based in an FE college, if they knew anybody who may be willing to take part, and they passed contact details on. This led to an interview and, following that, the participant was asked if they knew of a colleague who may be willing to take part, a method known as 'snowballing' (Smith et al, 2009). This process was repeated with further contacts and ultimately, thirteen participants from five colleges kindly gave their time to complete the questionnaire and between one to two hours, to be interviewed.

The colleges were geographically spread across a wide region in the north-west of England, being up to 150 miles apart. The use of several colleges across a region, rather than one setting, means that the results are not limited by college specific factors. For instance, if the study took place in one setting, such as a small rural college, the outcomes could be argued as rural-specific; similarly, a city centre location may also be considered atypical. Therefore, the use of five FECs, set in varied locations, allows for greater reliability of the data, because it draws from participants from different locations.

### Limitations

The outcomes of the interviews are synchronic snapshots that represent the participant's views on a particular day, and therefore this study captures a period which, to some extent, is isolated in time. Whilst the use of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis [IPA] provided structure and supported process of data collection and analysis, the changes in their conditions at a micro or macro-level could create a situation whereby on another occasion a participant may answer some questions differently. However, all previous studies are in this position. For instance, Young's (2002) study found poor resources were evident for HE in FE, but this did not appear in this study. This data was gathered ten years later than Young's publication, and it suggests that resources have improved in this time. In another ten years, a similar study could offer another synchronic snapshot which could be compared to this study. So this study is put forward as a situated, synchronic snapshot that is likely to change in the future. Therefore, despite being a limitation, it is a contribution that it gathers evidence for this particular point in time.

The study does not claim to offer wide generalisations from its results. Rather, it offers in-depth analysis contributing to knowledge that is building through similar small studies (Young, 2002; Turner et al. 2009; Feather, 2010). It provides a level of detail that will help to inform wider debates on HE in FE, identity and widening participation (Avis and Orr, 2016; Bathmaker; 2016). The IPA looks for differences and idiographic detail, but also finds emergent themes and comparable experiences.

### **Designing the interview guide**

Two sets of questions were needed for the study. The first was for the short questionnaire establishing some background data at the start of the interviews, shown in Appendix 5. The questionnaire allowed for some basic data to be gathered in order not take up interview time and that captured elements that might be awkward to ask in an interview, such as salary and age. The questions were formed in order to build a picture of individual respondent's background to support a better understanding of their experiences, and context, alongside the hermeneutic interpretation of the text produced following the interview transcriptions. It also served to capture some of participants' views in a different way. For instance, they were asked to mark where they viewed their career on a career trajectory. This provided a different, more visual method for considering the future which was a question that had posed problems in the pilot. Some of the questions were intended to provide a set of data to establish, for instance, elements of self-practice, such as the number of 'contact' hours that participants were expected to work in the year. Some individuals were less aware of this than others or had different interpretations and the data

did not prove particularly useful as it was inconsistent. As the study was not ultimately seeking to provide detail on contractual terms this limitation was acceptable.

The second set of questions, for the interviews, shown below, were developed in relation to the revised framework for the study in order to guide the discussion within super-ordinate themes of background, self-practice, relations with authority and pedagogy. In order to establish experiences within these themes, the interview structure was designed using guidance on posing open-ended, unbiased questions in phenomenological interviews (Smith et al. 2009). The participants were asked to discuss their experiences in the following areas with prompts around reflecting on how they felt about these aspects:

- Background including parents' views, education, and formative expectations. How they describe themselves to others.
- Early career and pathway into teaching HE.
- The self-practices of the role including teaching, marking and CPD and comparison to FE.
- Relationships with managers and authority sources.
- Their approach to teaching, learning and pedagogy, and views on HEIs.
- Levels of pleasure in the role and future aspirations.

The interviews took place in the participants' setting, and were recorded, professionally transcribed and minuted. A follow up phone call gave an opportunity for the participant to add anything or to make reflective comments on the experience of taking part. The calls

were an opportunity to thank the individuals for their time and contribution. None of the participants raised any issues or made further points. The most noteworthy element of the calls was that several participants felt the process was therapeutic and that they enjoyed the opportunity to share their experiences.

### **Data analysis**

The texts, produced following the transcription, amounted to hundreds of pages of data. This needed a systematic approach to analysis that could be replicated for each transcript and produce a transparent and organised set of data in a method that could be repeated if necessary in other similar studies. The use of IPA offered guidelines for the hermeneutic process of analysing the text in a set of stages (Smith et al. 2009), shown below, and these were used in conjunction with a similar process for analysis suggested by Alexiadou (2001). The text contained the discussion produced by the participant and interviewer (me), and within this further 'discourses' are found.

This meaning of discourse carries different interpretations and here it is asserted that there is the discourse on the linguistic level of the text, the story as told by the participant, and there is the second-level discourse which represents 'systems of thought' which produces 'subjectivity' whereby 'people construct reality through the use of language by attributing meaning...' (Alexiadou 2001, p54). This is the shaping function of the language, the telling of events in a certain way that creates a truth around the event as described earlier in Chapter Two. At the outset of the study, I did not know whether these second level discourses

would reveal themselves. However, during the interviews and data analysis, my interpretation was that participants created and perpetuated these second level discourses.

For example, in Clip 1, shown in Figure 4 below, Eddie reveals aspects of background his view of himself, and how he experienced this. Some of this text was extracted for its information on background, shown underscored. For instance, Eddie went to a state school, he went to FE College, then he completed a degree and so on. This contributed to understanding his background. The text highlighted in bold shows Eddie's reflections on his education and this is where there is emotional context around his actual experiences.

Experience is sometimes in small units and sometimes in larger units which are 'separated in time, but linked with a common meaning and the aim of the interview would be to recall the parts and their connections and discover this common meaning' (Smith et al., 2009, p2).

The bold text shows that his experience of school was one where he was not perceived as academic, and he felt 'side-tracked'. He also reveals that he was aware that he was intelligent although the description is 'half an ounce of brain' and this suggests an underplaying of his abilities. The language he uses to describe his intelligence is reinforcing the view of his teachers and seen here as a discourse on the second level so this contributes to his view of himself and that view which he presents.



|          |    |   |
|----------|----|---|
| 00:00:24 | S2 | <p>From the early years, wow. Yeah, <u>I went to a state school not too far from here in XXXX.</u> <b>Wasn't thought of then as having too high an expectation in terms of the teachers and myself,</b> and my progression into academia. It was more a case of "<b>He wants to be a sportsman or footballer and so we'll put him down the vocational routes you know, we'll side-track him into that.</b>" <u>Bad injury meant I couldn't pursue that.</u> <b>Had half an ounce of a brain in my head,</b> decided to <u>go to college to do a BTEC national diploma in media studies with a view then to becoming some kind of journalist or a writer</u> of some sense, then went on to do a <u>degree in Media Technology,</u> and then a master's in multimedia applications, because obviously <b>I'm an ICT teacher,</b> and then I left the MSC, well I <u>completed the MSC, finished, went into industry as a multimedia design and development officer, did 12 months in industry,</u> and then decided that teaching will be...I actually led a staff development section within the that organisation and then decided that I couldn't do this <b>so I considered teaching.</b> I went to do a <u>PGCE secondary school, trained in ICT at University of xxxx.</u> And then my first...after leaving xxxx, my <u>first appointment was this college</u> in 2002, <u>been here ever since.</u> (Laughs)</p> |
|----------|----|---|

Figure 4. Clip 1. 'Eddie'

My position as the researcher and interpreter of the text is significant (Smith et al. 2009). As seen in chapter one, personal experience in the sector meant that I had formed some preconceived ideas and assumptions. Through the processes of the research, in particular the pilot study, I became more aware of and attempted to 'bracket' these so as to minimise the influence of my assumptions on the study. Experience and familiarity with the setting of FE, HE, and HE in FE meant that as researcher and interpreter I hold an informed position with regard terminology. In the process of analysis there is a further double hermeneutic at play, with the participant trying to make sense of their experience and the researcher trying to make sense of the participants' version of it. 'Access to experience is dependent on what the participant tells us about that experience and that the researcher needs to interpret that account from the participant in order to understand that experience' (Smith et al., 2009, p3). The use of reflection, theoretical frameworks and transparent processes throughout, create a study where the data analysis is theoretically grounded and informed. This process could be repeated or carried out by other researchers with a consistent approach, thus supporting the validity and reliability of the data and the analysis.

The shared understanding of language and terminology, drawn from my experiences in the sector, was useful during data gathering. Occasionally though, I did ask for clarification of an acronym or term in the interview. For example, during Jim's Interview, I was unsure about the use of the word 'standard' [Clip 2, Figure 5]. This clarification at the time helped with the hermeneutic process during analysis of the text.

|          |    |  |
|----------|----|--|
| 00:07:25 | S2 | I think there's a very significant difference really...I think, partly, it's about the standard that they're working at. I think, when you work on HE programmes, it's significantly higher than a lot of the other colleagues.... |
| 00:07:37 | S1 | When you say "standard," do you mean...?   |
| 00:07:39 | S2 | Academic standards.  |
| 00:07:41 | S1 | Okay.  |
| 00:07:41 | S2 | Academic standards in that sort of level, yeah. But equally, I think the...this year, I've been working on Level 1 courses, I've covered the Level 1 course just recently.   |
| 00:07:56 | S1 | Level 1 FE?  |
| 00:07:58 | S2 | Level 1 FE.  |

**Figure 5. Clip 2. 'Jim'**

A further example where a phrase needed clarification is shown in Val's interview, Clip 3, shown in Figure 6. Here, I needed to clarify what the phrases 'I usually prep at home' and 'mark at home' meant to Val. Within my own university setting, this could be easy to interpret as working from home as the university culture, in general, allows for working from home if teaching and other commitments are not affected; whereas, within the HE in FE culture, 'at home' carried the meaning 'in my own time'. Because I had a background in

FE I knew that the likelihood was that this participant meant that she marked in her own time rather than worked from home, but I wanted to be certain.

|          |    |  |
|----------|----|--|
| 00:06:52 | S2 | I usually prep at home to be honest. I have Fridays to prep but usually when I'm finding what happens on Friday is all the other writing stuff that I have to ignore all week because I'm teaching full on and I had to do on those days. I was supervising three dissertations so as I'll try and see them on a Friday. So really my prep day doesn't end at the prep day. (Laughter) I usually prep at home. |
| 00:07:18 | S1 | What about marking?  |
| 00:07:20 | S2 | Mark at home. (Laughter)   |
| 00:07:20 | S1 | With your own time, do you mean? Or do you mean you can spend Friday at home marking?  |
| 00:07:29 | S2 | No, you can't spend Friday at home. I mark in my own time.   |
| 00:07:32 | S1 | Okay.  |

**Figure 6. Clip 3. 'Val'**

In order to be reflexive during the processes I continued to question my own interpretation in the interviews and data analysis. In attempting to be unbiased, Alexiadou (2001, p55) argues that researchers cannot be objective, bringing their own understanding, which is based on 'interests, assumptions and values'. However, if rigorous in approach bias can be

avoided even though the researcher is not neutral. In order to maintain rigor, the analysis uses a series of stages suggested by Alexiadou (2001) and Smith et al. (2009) as useful for phenomenological studies and these are now outlined.

### **Stage one**

In the first step of analysis I listened to the digital recordings of the interviews and studied the transcripts, which were referenced to the minute and second. This accuracy was useful as where meaning was unclear in the transcript, I was able to easily return to the digital recording at the exact point and clarify my interpretation. Occasionally, the transcriber had inserted 'inaudible' in brackets in the text with a time reference, and I was able to listen to this and in most cases confirm what was said. These were, on some occasions, associated with strong accents of the participants or unfamiliarity of the transcriber with the acronym language of Further Education.

### **Stage two**

The second stage involved selecting a transcript on the basis of its richness in responses and complexity and using it as a test for identifying and ordering 'meaningful' or 'significant' data at a stage where there was still a high degree of context within the extracts. This is an accepted method of reducing the data without losing significance (Punch, 2009, p153). The originals were not altered so as to allow for a return to the transcript at a later stage, for instance to interpret data in the light of the way a question was posed or in relation to what was said previously.

The text was lifted verbatim by copying from the original transcripts and pasting into a new document for each participant based on whether it was about their background, self-practices or relations with authority. This excluded the questions and left only the participants' responses. Phrases that were not to do with the analysis such as saying 'excuse me' when coughing or comments about room temperature or external interruptions, were removed. The table headings developed and were sub-divided to support the analysis as responses were taken and placed into columns. So for instance, at first, one column was headed 'Authority', but after placing the excerpts it was helpful that this be extended to include 'Relationships with Management' 'Autonomy' 'Policy implications' and so forth. This was based on emergent themes within these areas and it was helpful in making the data more accessible in the later stages of analysis.

Once the first transcript was analysed at this level, another was done to see if the extended headings and columns worked for the other transcripts. The headings initially chosen continued to be extended from the original four columns of the framework. The main categories remained in order to include elements of the research questions being explicitly stated, such as 'pedagogical implications' and to support my analysis of the emerging themes. This process continued with amendments being made and then placing the third transcript into the columns to ensure the process worked. This procedure was then carried out for all of the interview transcripts. This process did not lose sight of the framework, but allowed opportunities for reflection and consideration of the emergent themes.

In order to provide a document that was easy to interpret and analyse further, a visual approach was taken, placing comments down the rows of the table in an order as the

interview progressed. This meant that, as my questions on background were in the early part of the interviews, and at this point there was little said about pedagogy, the top section of the table was dense on the left rather than the right; whereas towards the middle of the table the balance changed. The tables were many pages long; however, they could be laid out and viewed once printed or scrolled through on screen. The result was a condensed version of the interview, showing responses only, and giving a spatial element in terms of seeing the responses in relation to the research themes. This method of early analysis clustering was a tool for handling the vast amount of data gathered.

Alexiadou offers a way of interpreting data where there could be unclear boundaries 'when the talk refers to a phenomenon encapsulated by a theme A, but at the same time it is illustrative or explanatory of a theme B, then the data bit is taken to belong to theme B' (2001, p59). The principle of hermeneutics is that the meaning of the text can go beyond the apparent intention of the first level discourse. At times, it was difficult to make a decision about which theme a response should be assigned, but the table was there to assist in the analysis rather than to restrict it, and could be revisited. It was possible to move the response or to use it in relation to a different category. For instance, a comment on the self-practice of teaching could be used in relation to self-practice, but might also be related to pedagogy or the student experience.

In understanding the way in which participants experience phenomena it is necessary to recognise the 'hierarchy of experience' (Smith et al., 2009, p2). There are small and large units of experience which are possibly separated in time but linked through meaning. The process of analysis established 'meaning' in the form of a word, sentence or paragraph and

this 'meaning is the unit of analysis' which can either be as a direct representation from the participant or as my own interpretation of what was said (Alexiadou, 2001, p58). For instance, June, (Figure 7. Clip 4) recounts how staff were given extra time for preparation when there was an impending inspection, but these hours were reduced afterwards and she says how it 'really would make you smile, I think'. What cannot be seen is the expression on her face, nor the intonation of her voice, but I could re-listen, re-visit the transcript, and analyse further. My interpretation of this is that there is some meaning beyond it making me 'smile', there was irony, and that it meant there was not enough time anymore and the preparation could not be done in this amount of time, and the 'smile' would be of a knowing disapproval. This carried the opposite intention that could be interpreted as the meaning from just a reading of the text; it was therefore highlighted within the text and contributed towards themes within self-practices of teaching and relations with authority.



|                      |    |   |
|----------------------|----|---|
| 00:13:46             | S2 | No. We were given, it was a bit... interestingly prior to QAA which is the HE equivalent of Ofsted, we were all offered eight hours for each new module and four hours for a module that we were familiar with. That's now been cut to four hours per module. We also had.... |
| 00:14:10<br>00:14:10 | S1 | You had...so that's additional for teaching.  |
| 00:14:12             | S2 | Yes.  |
| 00:14:13             | S1 | Four hours per module for preparation.  |
| 00:14:14             | S2 | Yes. I mean four hours per module really would make you smile, I think.   |

**Figure 7. Clip 4. 'June'**

### **Stage three**

The questionnaire data were analysed and used to establish tabular pen portraits of individual participants, shown in Chapter Four. The use of the questionnaire revealed aspects that may not have been captured by the interviews alone. The questionnaires offered an aspect of triangulation for the study in revealing further data and contextualising the interview data. Some themes arose such as the proportion of the participants that had left education at 16 and gone to an FE college, an experience which mirrored my own, which I did not anticipate finding. This aspect of the study acknowledges the need to have an understanding of background in order to contextualise the participant and to better understand their identity and validate the findings.

#### **Stage four**

In order to develop the themes emerging from the interview data, stage four required a process of clustering together key factors under headings in order to create a theme table. This involved analysis of the columns, to look for themes emerging within the categories of the table. The essence of the response was interpreted as a theme so for instance, practices around research activity were seen as a theme within self-practice. Where detail was needed or a contextualised understanding, reference was made to the verbatim response in the original transcript. This table consisted of several sheets of A4 taped together to form a large chart which was annotated during the process of stage five and beyond.

#### **Stage five**

Once the data was reduced the process of creating a presentable analysis of the findings commenced. This involved creating narratives based on the interview extracts. Using the adapted framework for the study, several versions and drafts occurred and the analytic process continued and developed. The background of the individuals, the questionnaires and data from the interviews were used to present further tabular overviews of the participants including their qualifications, parental occupation, their position on a career trajectory and personal reflections on the influence of their background. The presentation in tables is not for the purpose of quantification, but to make it easily accessible.

Throughout the process the focus remained on the individual and their experiences as IPA, even with larger samples, must use 'particular examples from individuals' in order to illustrate the themes at individual and group level (Smith et al. p106).

### **Stage six**

The stage of writing the analysis chapters was a continuation of the analysis itself. It was a process of going 'to and fro' between themes and individuals. The detailed piecing together allowed for links and relationships to be made and a narrative based on the first level discourses which could be analysed using the hermeneutic processes. It was at this point that these constructionist discourses appeared to me as interpreter and often required a return to the original interview text to ensure an accurate understanding. The process of refining themes continued and polarised views, commonality, and divergence of experiences emerged. It became clear at this point that repeated controlling discourses – the second level type- were increasingly significant and the theme of fulfilment was significant in terms of motivation and behaviours around teaching and learning. This stage produced narratives of experience which contribute to the discourses around HE in FE.

### **Stage seven**

The data analysis chapters include discussion around the experience of the participants and clips of text, as IPA analysis requires, so that the voice of the individual is not lost (Smith et al. 2009). Therefore, there is a large amount of original text interwoven within my hermeneutic analysis in order to maintain as much of the essence of the meaning as possible and to illuminate how this is interpreted. The transcript of the interview is embedded into the paragraphs within speech marks "thus" which differentiate it from text quoted from supporting literature, which is in single quotation marks 'thus'. The quoted interview text is not indented as this would have restricted the interweaving and made

these chapters awkward to read; instead it is written in a nuanced fashion, weaving the actual words of the participants with my commentary. The quoted text is double spaced, rather than single spaced, as per institutional guidelines.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has established the methodology and methods used to design and implement the data collection and analysis. A strength that supports the validity of the design, was the use of a pilot study which tested the framework and the questions, before the main study began. The pilot study highlighted my assumptions, which were a limitation of the original design. For instance, the view that the HE in FE lecturer would aspire to work in a traditional university. Thus, a process of reflection and adaptation took place, improving the validity of the main study.

The inclusion of a range of settings supports the relatability of the study, because it gives a broader view, that is not college-specific. Ethnicity was not recorded, and there was a mix of male and female participation, although more female than male. These are aspects of background that affect identity and form part of the data and analysis; however, they are not the specific lens for the analysis in this study.

My position as the interviewer and data analyst creates a study that produces my version of events. In most qualitative studies this limitation exists. The exploration of my own position in relation to the context of the study has helped to identify the lens through which I designed and implemented this study. I have insider knowledge of the environment, but

not experience of the role. I consciously attempted to reveal and bracket my assumptions, but of course this study remains perspectival (Bolton, 2010).

The adherence to IPA guidelines and suggested stages of analysis gave the study order and processes which can be repeated for other studies if needed. I am confident that a high degree of rigour around the stages and process of the methodology has produced a valid set of results, and that this process could be repeated in the same fashion for further studies. In the following four analysis chapters the transcript and questionnaire data are analysed.

## **Chapter Four: The background of the HE in FE lecturer**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, evidence is drawn from the questionnaires completed by the participants at the start of their interviews and used in conjunction with interview data. It focuses upon the routes that the participants took from school, their early ambitions, their own experience of education, and their qualifications. These establish background data around age, parents, education, qualifications, and career trajectory. This evidence provides pen portraits utilising tables to present data alongside the interview analysis, which uses interview text with critical commentary, in the method required for Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis [IPA] (Smith et al., 2009). The descriptive nature of early experiences also builds a narrative of their background. This is not necessarily analysed to find further meaning, but is used to create a contextual backdrop for the analysis, missing from the pilot study.

This study seeks to establish previous educational experiences and early careers, and indeed parental experiences, because how HE in FE lecturers approach teaching 'may vary depending on their own backgrounds' (Burkhill et al., 2008, p329). Ashwin (2009) also called for a closer look at the background of lecturing staff to better understand how lecturers approach teaching and learning interactions (2009). An exploration of the participant's background and parental occupations helps to contextualise the identity of the HE in FE lecturer in relation to their early influences and experiences. This allows for a consideration of social reproduction and whether or not the individuals in this study had a

‘feel for the game’ which led them to this role (Ashwin, 2009, p107). Parental background would influence capital in these fields, in line with Bourdieu’s habitus, through ‘unconscious processes of internalization’ (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2009, p47). This study looks at these processes of becoming through struggles and selecting or creating discourses, linking to social constructionism theories (Clarke, 2009, p191). Background is important and the pathway to our present state cannot be overlooked as ‘the self that we are is one that we will need to examine from as many different angles as possible’ (Prado, 2009, p9).

### **Parents and early ambitions**

The parents of the participants had a range of occupational backgrounds as shown below in Figure 8. Whilst this study looks for the idiographic it finds themes emerging in relation to working class and lower middle class backgrounds of the participants. There is evidence of nursing and military backgrounds, which required training, but it appears that June’s mother, who was a teacher, was the only one likely to have attended a Higher Education course.

The majority were in traditionally working class occupations and some participants described their families as working class. Jim described his family: “My father was basically an unskilled factory worker and so along with most of the family. They’re basically unskilled workers of various forms.” Walter reflected on the differing backgrounds of each of his parents: “But his [father’s] background was quite working class and he worked himself up; whereas my mother’s background was more middle class. [ ]<sup>1</sup> Whereas my father’s father

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<sup>1</sup> Denotes some text is cut.

was also a policeman but kind of a constable and he had a big family. And very few of them actually went to sort of further higher education or professional status.”

| <b>Participant</b> | <b>Participant description of parental occupation. [Father shown first where two are given]</b> | <b>Recollection of wanting to become a teacher or lecturer</b> | <b>Career they aspired to</b> | <b>Participants' work role before lecturing</b> |
|--------------------|---|--|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Bernie</b>      | Marine Engineer/<br>Air-sea steward   | No   | 'Cartographer'                | Landlord public house<br>Primary teacher        |
| <b>Tracey</b>      | Lorry driver/<br>cleaner  | No   | 'Didn't think about it'       | Retail manager                                  |
| <b>Jim</b>         | Unskilled factory workers   | No   | 'Surveyor'                    | Straight into teaching FE                       |
| <b>Eddie</b>       | Factory worker/<br>chef   | Yes  | 'Footballer'                  | Multi-media design                              |
| <b>Stacey</b>      | Cinema manager  | No   | 'Film industry'               | Early Years worker                              |
| <b>Tina</b>        | Royal Navy Chief Petty Officer/<br>housewife  | No   | 'Nanny'                       | Nursery nurse/nanny<br>Primary school teacher   |
| <b>Rick</b>        | Factory supervisor  | No   | 'None'                        | Art centre manager                              |
| <b>Georgina</b>    | BT engineer and Teaching Assistant  | Yes  | 'Teaching or nursing'         | Nursery/Primary school teacher                  |
| <b>June</b>        | Engineer/ Domestic Science teacher  | No   | 'Medicine'                    | Nurse/Midwife/Health visitor                    |
| <b>Walter</b>      | Senior police officer / 'at home but artist'  | No   | 'Management'                  | Factory management                              |
| <b>Shelley</b>     | Chef/receptionist   | No   | 'Nursing'                     | Teaching FE                                     |
| <b>Val</b>         | Shop keepers  | Yes  | 'Self-employed'               | Ran business then teaching assistant            |
| <b>Rebecca</b>     | Postman/ midwife  | No   | 'Travel industry'             | Travel industry                                 |

**Figure 8. Table to show parental occupation, early ambitions and previous profession**



The questionnaire asked the participants what vocation they had aspired to as a child and what their vocation was before entering lecturing, if this was not their first employment. As Figure 8 shows, their responses ranged from no aspirations, to the childhood dreams of being a footballer or working in the film industry. There were also examples of management for Walter, a role that he did later have in industry, medicine for June, who then went into nursing, teaching or nursing for Georgina who went on to primary teaching, and the travel industry for Rebecca who did go into the travel industry. Most of the vocational backgrounds before going into lecturing in FE were linked to the vocational programmes that they were teaching on, which is expected given the vocational focus of FE (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005).

### **Qualifications**

All of the participants, except one, were still teaching Higher Education, for which a Bachelor's degree is a minimum requirement, and therefore they had all taken routes which led them to a degree programme. Out of 13, 11 had a PGCE or Masters so only two participants did not have post-graduate qualifications and one of these was currently studying for an MA, as shown in Figure 9, below. Some had gone to university straight from school, with Jim, Walter, Rick and Bernie taking this traditional route. Bernie dropped out and did not return to do her Bachelor's degree until after having children. June did General Nursing, midwifery and health visiting before going on to do her degree. Georgina, Eddie, Tracey and Shelley went directly to university following FE courses. Val, Stacey, Tina and Rebecca all worked before going to university as mature students and they all studied at FE

colleges for all or part of their HE experience on programmes validated by universities to run in colleges so they had direct experience of HE in FE as undergraduate students.

| <b>Participant</b> | <b>FE from school</b> | <b>HE from school or FE</b> | <b>First degree as a mature student</b> | <b>HE Qualifications</b>      | <b>Currently studying</b> |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Bernie</b>      | no                    | yes [but dropped out]       | yes                                     | BA PGCE (QTS)                 | MA                        |
| <b>Tracey</b>      | yes                   | yes                         | no                                      | BA PGCE (post-comp) MBA       | PhD                       |
| <b>Jim</b>         | no                    | yes                         | no                                      | BA MSc PGCE (QTS) PGLTHE      | no                        |
| <b>Eddie</b>       | yes                   | yes                         | no                                      | BA MSc PGCE (QTS)             | no                        |
| <b>Stacey</b>      | yes                   | no                          | yes                                     | FD/BA PGCE (post-comp)        | no                        |
| <b>Tina</b>        | yes                   | no                          | Yes                                     | FD/BA QTS                     | no                        |
| <b>Rick</b>        | no                    | yes                         | no                                      | BA MSc                        | no                        |
| <b>Georgina</b>    | yes                   | yes                         | no                                      | BA MA QTS                     | no                        |
| <b>June</b>        | no                    | yes (nursing)               | no                                      | SRN/MW/HV BA PGCE (post-comp) | no                        |
| <b>Walter</b>      | no                    | yes                         | no                                      | BA MA PGCE (post-comp)        | no                        |
| <b>Shelley</b>     | yes                   | yes                         | no                                      | BA PGCE (post-comp)           | no                        |
| <b>Val</b>         | no                    | no                          | yes                                     | FD/BA Cert-Ed                 | no                        |
| <b>Rebecca</b>     | yes                   | no                          | yes                                     | FD/BA Cert-Ed /MA             | no                        |

**Figure 9. Table to show participants' education and qualifications**

The majority of the participants had also completed post-compulsory teaching certificates within FE settings. Burkhill et al., argued that there may be a 'common 'language' derived from a shared background' in relation to FE teacher training (2008, p329). Out of all of the

participants, only Bernie, Rick and Jim had no experience of being a student in an FE setting at either FE or HE level. Therefore, personal experience of FE emerges as a theme in relation to background.

Jim and Shelley were the only two participants who had gone straight into teaching FE. Jim had a Secondary PGCE and after graduation started teaching A' Levels in an FE College.

Following university, Shelley purposefully went into a post-compulsory PGCE for teaching in FE contrary to the majority of FE lecturers who, others found, 'slipped' into the role

(Gleeson et al., 2005, p12). Most of the participants did correspond with this pattern,

having prior professional backgrounds. The path into teaching FE had, for several, been one that started part-time, with Rebecca, June, Bernie, Shelley, Tina, Val, Jo and Georgina all

teaching part-time hours before getting offered permanent work, fitting with accepted

patterns of entering the profession by falling into it (Gleeson et. al., 2005). Eddie realised

after a year in industry he would rather teach. Others spent many years having successful

careers in their own field, such as June in nursing, midwifery and health visiting, and Walter

in factory management.

Walter lost his job in manufacturing when UK markets took a down turn and decided it was

time for a total career change as he had a family and did not want to move: "And whilst I

could've got a good job in the industry in yyyy, all my family lived in xxxx. My kids were just

settled into schools, and my wife had a very good job. And consequently, I decided at that

time to look around for a career change. And we made...I actually made a conscious effort

not to look for another job but to look for another career. And at that time, it was actually

xxxx College, were looking for someone to run their HND and HNC in business who had

recent vocational experience as well as the academic qualifications.” This conforms with notions of ‘dual-professionalism’ as the participants have experienced previous ‘communities of practice’ before entering the FE setting (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

### **Views on early influences**

Participants were asked about their early influences on their choices. Tracey found her parents ambivalent: “And my parents, I suppose, had no interest whatsoever in education. It was never like ‘what subjects are you doing for O-Level?’ They were very detached. So, I could have left at 16 altogether, but probably because my friends were going to college, I went to college.”

Georgina, was encouraged to follow in her mother’s footsteps: “My mum was a teaching assistant in a school so she, sort of, she didn’t push me, but encouraged me to go to college and if I didn’t know what I wanted to do, go and do the same as her.” Georgina’s mother understands the field of FE and Child Care courses and this appears to give Georgina confidence.

Jim came from a background where he was expected to go into a manual trade: “I went to a comprehensive school. And so, my intention when I was coming to the end of the fifth year was to go into industry and work as an electrician or surveyor. That was the key thing. So, it was more kind of the manual, kind of constructions-type industries I was more interested in.” He was considered too academic by the recruiters and could not get an apprenticeship, so he stayed on to do A’ levels and applied for university. He felt this was contradictory to his background: “I grew up in kind of a working-class background. So, my assumption was

that I would go along with all my other school friends who tended to go into the forces or into manual jobs so that is the way I thought I was going.”

Some participants felt that their teacher’s views had led to negative self-worth. Tina said: “My teacher’s always said I was never really going to go very far and never going to amount to anything.” Similarly, Eddie felt that when he was at school the teachers had decided he was not academic and pushed him towards practical subjects: “Wasn’t thought of then as having too high an expectation in terms of the teachers and myself, and my progression into academia. [ ] It was more a case of he wants to be a sportsman or footballer and so we’ll put him down the vocational routes you know, we’ll side-track him into that.”

For Shelley, negative experiences in school were followed by positive experiences in FE and despite doing well in her GCSEs she felt that “A Levels wasn’t for me, so I went to xxxx FE College and did a BTEC National Diploma in Health and Social Care with the aim of becoming a nurse.” She became pregnant and did a BA Hons in Health Studies instead, and then unable to find work, was influenced by a friend and did a PGCE in post-compulsory teaching with her placement in the FE college where she still teaches. Shelley felt at home teaching FE and based this partly on her own FE background: “I was never settled at school, and when I first thought about teaching as an option, it didn’t even cross my mind to look at primary or secondary, it didn’t cross my mind at all because I was very, very happy at college. And I felt like I was treated very differently and I was treated more like an adult, and I was able to learn a lot more in the way I like to learn. And so you know, I think that would definitely have been part of why I then chose FE to teach.” Shelley recognises her

own time in FE as a motivational factor in wanting to teach in the FE environment, suggesting high self-determination (Deci and Ryan, 1985).

Similarly, Tracey had not liked school, but enjoyed the FE environment: "I didn't do well in school and left school with one O-Level then went to the local college, where everything changed. [ ] I loved FE. I'd gone to an all-girls grammar school, felt very hemmed in." This suggests that Tracey found school was a controlling environment compared to HE where she found more autonomy as a student, conforming to self-determination theories of motivation (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Tracey found fulfilment in the FE environment: "I'd not enjoyed school and my motivation finally came when I went to my local college of FE and I found a teacher that inspired me." Tracey saw this as an influence on her eventual decision to teach in FE: "I naïvely felt that working in FE I would be working with highly motivated learners, which I was one of, but not in school." The use of the term 'naïvely felt' suggests that she saw this as an incorrect view, but she consciously acknowledges the link between her motivation as a student in FE and her desire to teach in FE.

Rebecca had strong ideas about her future when leaving school: "I started off really being keen to enter into the travel industry. I wanted to travel the world and see the world. And so what I did, I left school at 16 with my O levels. And rather than go on to do a degree, which was an option, I decided to start work in the travel industry on a sort of vocational course on a YTS scheme. And that was what I did for a number of years. I worked my way up through the travel industry into a management, and a senior management position working for different companies on the way." During this time, she completed programmes

in FE and went on to become an NVQ assessor: “I’ve always had a passion for learning. So I’ve always been keen into, sort of, up-skilling myself.”

Rebecca recognised the pleasure in her own learning and this appears motivational and fulfilling. She began to teach part-time in FE whilst maintaining her job with a Travel Agent and then after getting married and having a baby: “I decided to go back to night school and do my Cert Ed part time at night school because that was the next stage [ ] I got my Cert Ed. I carried on doing a little bit of teaching; still worked in the travel industry part time, and then decided to embark on a degree part-time in my own time again at night school.”

Rebecca completed her degree in Education Studies within an FE college. She continued in a training role within a large travel company, before eventually getting made redundant at which point she got a job teaching in an FEC.

Some of the participants entered Higher Education as mature students. Stacey gained Child Care qualifications in FE and worked in Early Years settings for some years: “I moved back here and had a baby and decided I needed a change because I was on my own with this baby [ ] and I wanted to be better for my daughter so I went to college and did my foundation degree [ ] I did really well on it, topped up at a local university. I got my BA honours -loved it. I decided that teaching maybe was the right way to go. And jumped straight to my PGCE, and did my PGCE. I was fortunate to get some hours straight afterwards and here I am now, still doing it.” The language that Stacey uses is positive throughout. She describes herself as ‘fortunate’, that she ‘loved it’, that she ‘jumped’ in. She creates a positive discourse around her background and her role.

The routes taken by the participants suggest high levels of agency for most as they move from backgrounds where education was not valued, school was not a good experience, where working-class routes suggested unskilled roles, and where first careers ended in redundancy or their own children and families restricted options. They showed the ability to move beyond these structural constraints into Higher Education, and ultimately into teaching HE. This level of agency is significant, and emerges as a theme, in the development of their identity and potentially in the developing identity of the students, because the teacher's identity impacts on the experience and is part of who the student becomes (Infinito, 2003a). Their enjoyment of education and positive feelings of fulfilment motivated these participants, which appears in line with self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985).

### **The position on the career trajectory and ambitions**

The stage in the lifecycle and experience in the role are recognised as important for understanding teacher identity and motivation, because they affect confidence and attitude towards the role (Day and Gu, 2010). The table in Figure 10, below, shows the participants' views on the questions which captured data on age, length of time teaching, their position on a career trajectory, the future of their role and their aspirations. The data showed four participants felt that they were between the middle and the end of their career, with Walter being the only one to place himself at the end. Bernie, Georgina, June, Shelley and Rebecca all placed themselves directly in the middle of their careers. Eddie, Stacey and Val had all indicated that they felt that they were at a midpoint between early and middle on the career trajectory.



The placing on the career trajectory shows that personal perspective is a significant factor and that the participants lived out their roles with varying attitudes towards linking age and position on the career trajectory. June, being relatively close to retirement age did not feel that she was close to the end of her career and placed herself mid-career. It demonstrates that the discourse around career is subjective, part of the relationship with the self. The process of placing the self on the trajectory requires the participant to pinpoint the present in relation to their life and on reflection this was a task that perhaps shows perception, fear or desire rather than reality.

These results show that all of the participants were aged 35 or over, indicating that the identity of lecturing HE in FE may be related to age, in so much as the demographic is likely to exclude the younger age group that teaching in schools, for instance, includes; although it is not possible to generalise from this small sample. The data also suggested that all of the participants saw themselves as continuing in their present role.

| Partici-<br>pant | Age | Years<br>teaching<br>FE/HE | Position on<br>career trajectory:<br>early...middle...end<br>Marked with 'x' | See self<br>as<br>carrying<br>on in<br>role | Aspire to<br>manage<br>ment | Aspire to<br>teaching in<br>university | In terms of<br>future | Worry<br>about<br>future<br>of self<br>in role |
|------------------|-----|----------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Bernie</b>    | 47  | 0/1                        | e.....x.....e  | yes   | '?                          | yes                                    | positive              | '?   |
| <b>Tracey</b>    | 43  | 19/4                       | e....m...x....e  | yes   | no                          | 'unsure'                               | negative              | yes  |
| <b>Jim</b>       | 53  | 29/11                      | e....m...x...e   | yes   | no                          | yes                                    | negative              | yes  |
| <b>Eddie</b>     | 36  | 10/2                       | e...x..m....e  | yes   | yes                         | yes                                    | negative              | yes  |
| <b>Stacey</b>    | 38  | 6/6                        | e...x..m.....e   | yes   | no                          | no                                     | positive              | no   |
| <b>Tina</b>      | 43  | 10/4                       | e....m..x....e   | yes   | yes                         | yes                                    | positive              | yes  |
| <b>Rick</b>      | 49  | 23/14                      | e.....m..x...e   | yes   | no                          | yes                                    | indiff                | yes  |
| <b>Georgina</b>  | 35  | 5/5                        | e.....x .....e   | yes   | no                          | 'possibly'                             | pos/neg               | yes  |
| <b>June</b>      | 55  | 21/20                      | e.....x .....e   | yes   | no                          | 'possibly'                             | positive              | yes  |
| <b>Walter</b>    | 59  | 22/22                      | e.....m.....x  | yes   | no                          | no                                     | negative              | yes  |
| <b>Shelley</b>   | 36  | 8/1                        | e.....x.....e  | yes   | no                          | no                                     | Indiff                | no   |
| <b>Val</b>       | 45  | 5/5                        | e...x..m....e  | yes   | no                          | yes                                    | positive              | yes  |
| <b>Rebecca</b>   | 45  | 19/5                       | e.....x.....e  | yes   | yes                         | no                                     | positive              | no   |

**Figure 10. Table to show an overview of participant age and perception of career**

However, when this was discussed in more detail during the interviews some did reveal that they were actively looking elsewhere for work, thinking of retiring or had managerial ambitions. This shows that depending on methods there can be contradictory results, and this confirms that when using questionnaire data unseen aspects may be at play under the surface. This highlights the benefits of the interview method and the use of IPA, which allowed for much deeper exploration and to this extent offers triangulation.

### **Views on self in the role and view of their present 'position'**

The participants' views on their achievements were explored further in the interviews and attention turns now to the hermeneutic analysis of the texts produced from the transcripts.

Rebecca: "I feel really quite proud of my achievements really, because I feel as though, I didn't do A' levels in the traditional way. I didn't go to university in the traditional way. I started work at 16 as an apprentice and I think a lot of people could, I could - oh, maybe a role model is not the right word but it is an alternative route to education where I started off working and did all these courses and qualifications over the years to one day become a lecturer in a university centre. It can be done in other ways and it can also, I think can inspire people as well." This is a positive view of her indirect route to HE.

Rebecca recognises her own ambition and sees her success as motivational for the students. On her aspirations for the future Rebecca was clear that she would like to stay within the setting and progress into management even though she lacked confidence: "Possibly the head of centre, head of a curriculum centre one day. I'm not quite sure whether I've got the ambition to become a vice-principal or a principal. I'd have to work on my confidence even more so because I just feel as though I'm not that, I'm nowhere near that part yet. But who knows if I do get a manager's job in the future and then a head of centre in five years' time, maybe in eight years' time. Who knows how I would feel? So never say never, never say never, with me." Rebecca chooses the discourse of opportunity and possibility opening her options rather than closing them, creating a narrative that allows her progression rather than limiting it.

Eddie also considered his background in relation to his achievements: "Again this is obviously a personal thing, this is bringing myself from the working class background, I'm you know, you were told at school you would never make much of your life so get to kind of this with a master's and a PGCE you know, middle manager at 32, or whatever I was, I think it's quite an achievement." Eddie recognises his own agency and values his achievements; this is an area of fulfilment for him. However, Eddie was not entirely happy with his position and actively looking for work outside of his current setting: "Well I'm constantly, I'm looking for new jobs, I just saw one I want, yesterday, that hopefully by the time we speak again maybe movement on that that's director of curriculum in another local college."

Tracey linked her aspirations to the vulnerability of the programme that she taught on: "I feel like this time it's kind of taking a day at a time. I've got no idea. A year ago, we were worried that the PGCE wouldn't run. We were worried, you know, I think it's common speak now to feel the pressures of redundancies and courses closing if they're not cost effective. And our line manager always made it very common place in meetings to talk about our course in particular and how it didn't make any money." Tracey was clear that she had no intention of moving into management: "When you move into management, you have to live and eat and breathe the role. You know, like I talked about answering emails. You know, like all the managers that I interviewed for my own research, it's commonplace to answer emails in bed. And I'm thinking, dear God. Would I really want that? It's bad enough. And that's exactly what lecturers will say when I ask them about moving into management. They say, 'Well, I think the job's bad enough as it is. That's even worse.'" Tracey considers the demands high and perceives that this would be worse in a management role, a contrasting

view to Rebecca and Eddie. She perceives that the change in attitude and self-practices that are required in a management role to be incongruous with how she wants to be. The identity of management appears very unattractive to her. The lack of perceived fulfilment and elements of the role that she finds challenging make her want to avoid aspects of management identity for herself. She is purposeful in her positioning.

This is significant as it shows the link between fulfilment and motivation to take on the identity of certain roles and this is seen elsewhere in the data in relation to other self-practices. This study also shows how much this varies from individual to individual as the contrasting views to Tracey, that Rebecca and Eddie show, with their eagerness to progress into management which also supports Deci and Ryan's assertions that some personalities prefer different environments (2002).

For some, the desire to stay living in the same location, near family, affected their view. Georgina said: "I'm not 100% sure, but if I lived nearer to a university I would like to teach in a university, but I just can't bear the two hours driving every day in traffic. [ ] The starting pay; from the jobs I've seen the starting pay is more than my current pay so that is a good incentive but the time wise, if it would involve a long working day and an-hour-and-a-half to get there and an hour-and-a-half to get back in rush hour traffic, and then having to come home and do work as well, like I do working here, that would put me off." On being asked if she would move Georgina was clear: "No, I'm a home bird. I live two miles from my parents." These background factors are significant in the choices made by several participants with commitments to family, children and location raised as a reason for staying in their current role as well as the route that they took into the role. Evelin (2005) found

that there were more opportunities for women and ethnic groups in these marginal spaces than in the traditional, more elite HEIs. The positioning of HE in FE is also providing a local offer to those who could not previously have taught in HE, because it was not available locally. This highlights the importance of considering background during an analysis of identity and recognising the range of structures in place beyond the setting, that are influential on the individual.

For some there was a conscious effort to leave a previous role in order to teach HE in FE. Bernie: “I took a pay cut to come here. And I’m more than happy with what I decided to do [ ] over the course of the many jobs that I’ve done I made a pact that I would never work somewhere where I wasn’t completely happy. Life is too short. So when the opportunity arose to come here, having experienced in whatever fashion as a part-time, hourly-paid worker, I decided that regardless of monetary considerations, I’d like to do that. And I am more than happy with what I decided to do. As apparently are my family, I’m a bit less stressful apparently now.” Bernie reinforces the positive effects of the job with her reference to the reaction within her family. Her move into her role was purposeful and she has a conscious awareness of searching for a role that makes her happy.

Rick’s view of the future linked to policy and context around FE. He held his role for many years, having started before FE colleges were incorporated. His concerns for the FE sector echoed those of Feather (2013): “I fear for FE. I think we’re, well, we’ve been the Cinderella service for as long as I’ve worked here, pre-incorporation. I think it’s a government, successive governments haven’t a clue what to do with FE; I think a lot of them don’t understand FE. They’ve certainly never been there. And I think they...you know, their

interest really lies in secondary and primary and HE, and this funny little thing in the middle just kind of gets lost, you know. So I do fear for our sector. But if I were to move on, it...I would prefer it to be into HE proper.” This is an interesting use of language referring to ‘HE proper’ and suggesting that the offer of FE in HE is not a ‘proper’ version of HE but an alternative, echoing Creasy’s view (2013). This use of language reinforces the discourse around CBHE being something different.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter the background of the participants was explored in relation to their own educational experiences, parental occupations and reflections on their aspirations. The data shows that there are some common experiences amongst the participants with themes emerging. These include most of them coming from working-class and lower middle-class backgrounds where experience of HE amongst the parents was low, placing them in what could now be considered as WP categories, suggesting high levels of agency in the participants. Themes also include the participants taking routes through FE before HE, and only two had no personal experience as a student in FE.

The participants did not have an early ambition to teach in FE or HE, with a variety of early career paths leading eventually to teach in FE in an ad-hoc fashion as others suggest is likely (Gleeson et al. 2005). In reflecting on achievement and position on the career trajectory, some were very pleased with their positioning although they did talk about desire to leave or progress beyond their current roles. Themes emerged around fulfilment in their achievements, with some recognising their motivation as a student in FE, as a motivator for

them to teach in FE and HE in FE. In the next chapter the self-practices of the HE in FE lecturer are explored.



## **Chapter Five: Self-practices [I]: preparation, teaching, marking and scholarly activity**

### **Introduction**

This chapter explores the participants' views on their role including preparation, marking, supporting students and teaching. This study recognises self-practices of the HE in FE role as significant, because these are the ways in which 'we shape our teaching selves' (Clarke, 2009, p191). The analysis is based on the text created from the transcriptions of the interviews. The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) requires analysis of the idiographic experiences of the participants through the text produced by the transcription so this is used extensively to tell individual stories and these are analysed for further meaning, evidence of fulfilment, struggles with the self and for the creation of second-level discourses found in social constructionist analyses (Smith, et al. 2009).

### **An overview of the role**

On the whole, self-practices were similar between participants, and in line with other studies (Burkhill, et al. 2008). There were partner HEIs providing sets of regulatory guidelines, overseeing moderation and offering support. These college tutors had varying levels of freedom to design schemes of work, assignments and lesson plans. The majority of participants were HE programme leaders and had high levels of responsibility and involvement with partner HEIs. Some taught exclusively on HE, but over half of them also taught on FE programmes as well as HE programmes, in line with other research (Young, 2002; Simmons and Lea, 2013). They outlined their roles as involving administrative tasks

which included, for instance, recruitment, interviews, record keeping, attending exam boards, meetings, teaching, marking, supporting students, and preparation for teaching which the participants often referred to as 'research'. There was little evidence of the academic research associated with definitions of more traditional forms of Higher Education (Barnett, 2000) and this is in line with others' findings (Young, 2002; Feather, 2010; Creasy, 2013). This study is not looking to define the HE in FE role against HE in HEIs, in the us and them understanding of identity, which measures differences in terms of a deficit (Clarke, 2008).

### **Self-practices of preparation, teaching and marking**

The participants' experiences of preparation and research for teaching, alongside marking and student support, were seen as central to their role. The participants tended to feel that it was important that they kept up to date by reading journal articles, texts and internet research. They also felt that this was more intense than the preparation needed for FE lectures, and therefore a significant difference to FE practice. Feather (2014) suggests that the processes of reading and researching a subject in order to teach the subject is a type of scholarship that should not be overlooked. The participants shared similar views on the time-consuming nature of the work behind the HE teaching with Eddie explaining: "For the three hours of teaching, there's an awful lot of preparation goes in to that [ ] You've got you know, you've got to refresh your skills, a lot of reading, a lot of research. So for those three hours a week you're probably doing double, if not more than that outside of class, to ensure that you can go ahead and deliver a good service to these people that are paying for your time. You know, that really has to be -it has to be bob on." The reference to fee-paying HE

students and expectation of a high standard was made by other participants. The pressure of accountability to students as customers is an outcome of the neo-liberal marketisation of education (Morley, 2003).

Tina linked the extra preparation to the level of the work for HE: "I know from experience that the lessons I delivered in FE were totally different to the lessons in HE because my subject knowledge hasn't changed, but the students and teaching have. And that takes so much more of my time because I'm always looking for different research articles or new information; whereas at Level 1, 2, and 3, it's about partaking of common sense and general knowledge linked with the vocational qualification. Yet, the HE level, it's about research and about new innovation and about stretching yourself as a lecturer in order to be able to stretch students, you know, bringing them things that...new information or new research. And you can only find that if you have the time to read and research yourself." This suggests that Tina is aware of a different pedagogical approach that she takes between HE and FE teaching.

Stacey shared Tina's view around the level of work and outlined the difference in preparation between the levels, but she appeared to have found ways to put less effort in to the preparation to gain a work-life balance: "And my daughter gets extremely cross with me. 'You're not working again, mummy?' 'Yeah, I am.' So, I got better. When I first started out, I was so keen and you know I spent loads of time prepping. And now, I've got quite strict with what I do and I say, right this is worth the time; this is not worth the time." Stacey allows the competing needs of her child to let her control the time given to preparation. She used the phrase 'So I got better' in relation to putting in less time for

planning and preparation. Her identity as a mother competes with the professional identity and she compromises and prioritises some practices over others. This is one of the ethico-political struggles that social constructionists observe (Burr, 2015). Stacey accepts that less time is given to preparation in order to meet the needs of her daughter even though preparation for teaching was an enjoyable aspect of the role for her. Stacey: "I absolutely love planning what I'm teaching and how I'm going to deliver it or change it from the year before. It didn't work that well. I'm going to change it; I'm going to mix it up a bit and I absolutely -like I'm in control over it." This conforms to Deci and Ryan's theories on self-determination and choice making (1985). Stacey has found autonomy despite the pressures of the planning.

Other participants also acknowledged elements of fulfilment in the practice of researching for their teaching even though it was in their own time. June: "I couldn't enjoy or deliver my job without it. So this summer, although I have got four weeks off, I have a pile of books which will be going away with me just for updating my reading and journal articles and I certainly make a point of reading one general article [per week] which, - just to keep progressed in the subject." This suggests that June, like most of the other participants, takes a scholarly stance toward HE teaching which challenges views that HE-ness might be missing from CBHE (Creasy, 2013) and is in line with Feather's view that this preparation is scholarly activity (Feather, 2014).

Walter compared his experiences to those in the partner HEI: "Most of the colleagues that I deal with at the university are obviously in quite small specialised areas. So they specialise in marketing or parts of marketing or economics. And they have research interests, which

are often highly specialised. Whereas here, at HE, I teach everything other than finance. And so, I mean, it happens I've been, you know, sort of trained in all those and have experience in all those things, but to keep the theory up to date is actually quite a lot of work." So for HE lecturers in HEIs the process of being research active replaces the need for high levels of preparation in the subject. This view does not account for the pressure felt by those in HEIs to be research active and the stresses that they might experience around the REF (Clegg, 2008).

### **Autonomy in HE teaching practices**

A recurring and significant area of fulfilment was the autonomy found in HE teaching. Val enthused about her freedom to teach subjects that she found interesting and to have flexibility in her planning and delivery. She had the freedom to plan and teach how she wanted prevented her teaching becoming "pedestrian". Confident in her subject knowledge, she felt the freedom to change what she was doing at the last minute if that seemed appropriate: "Just because I've done a scheme doesn't mean that that's what we're doing this week." Val was "doing things off the wall sometimes and that's fine you know as long as they get it; it's okay... I feel I've got a lot of freedom in that way." For Val this was a highlight of the role. It appears to boost her self-esteem in the role and motivates her.

Bernie, who previously worked as a primary school teacher, felt that high levels of trust were given to the HE tutors in terms of teaching. "Being allowed the freedom to develop, to have somebody have the confidence that you know what you're doing. So therefore you are allowed to do what you can do is... it's been really nice... so to actually have that

freedom has been a great pleasure this year”. Bernie felt that “within limits or boundaries to have that autonomy to develop and teach how you need to or what you need to is very enlightening”.

Rebecca exuded pleasure in the role despite the workload: “Research for teaching is very, very, can be very time consuming especially when you’ve got that luxury of designing your own modules and that takes hours and hours of work” but the reward of this ‘luxury’ was there to motivate her. “Of all the courses I’ve ever taught on throughout FE, I can’t ever remember ever writing –really having- all that ownership.” Rebecca found this extremely fulfilling: “I thought it was wonderful. I just thought it was brilliant that it wasn’t prescribed. ‘There you go Rebecca; there’s your module off you pop’”. Rebecca added “I just thought that was fantastic to have that opportunity to just to, they trust to what you’re going to be delivering and how you’re going to be delivering and how you’re going to assess it. As long as it meets the stan[dards] –validation regs- you’ve got free rein. And I just thought that was fantastic. And I know in FE there was a certain amount of autonomy and there was, but not –nowhere near as much, nowhere near as much...”

The themes emerging around preparation for teaching and teaching are high levels of confidence and enjoyment in the planning and delivery of teaching. The participants enjoy the freedoms that they find in the curriculum level and content. Stacey said: “I absolutely love my job. I enjoy coming to work, thoroughly enjoy coming to work and do what I do. I love being with the students. I never set out to be a teacher or a lecturer but I love what I do”. June made a similar comment: “I absolutely love HE teaching. I really enjoy it.” Tina felt that she would not want to go back to FE since teaching on HE programmes: “But my

plan I think really is to stay in HE because the position that I got was just HE. It's made me realise how much I enjoy teaching in HE." The links with pleasure in the role and autonomy are explored further in chapter seven.

Repeatedly, participants reported a freedom in their role that they did not find in FE. This appears to be an important factor in understanding the fulfilment gained from the HE in FE role. These participants were motivated to put in high levels of preparation despite feeling over-loaded with work due. In Chapter Seven there is an exploration of how the participants found ways to manipulate their situation to maintain this element of autonomy.

### **Not wanting to teach HE in FE**

One participant felt differently. Shelley, had stopped teaching HE out of choice and much preferred her FE work. A primary issue stemmed from the fee paying nature of HE which was unlike FE where usually the course is free to the student. This caused her to feel pressure, linking back to the accountability pressures seen earlier, in terms of delivering something that the students felt was value for money. Shelley: "I'm aware at HE they are paying a lot of money and I would hate to feel that I wasn't giving someone value for their money". Her perception is around the HE student as a more demanding customer than the non-paying FE student (Morley, 2003).

It was more complex than the fees alone, because Shelley did not start with a view of what she wanted to deliver, as the other participants did: "On the very first session... I asked those students what they wanted". This loss of control to the students led to a demanding situation where: "I felt the expectation was that I delivered all the knowledge, I have to have

all the knowledge and I have to deliver it to them. [ ] They wanted me to go in and deliver the knowledge via lectures, via hand-outs, via you know, maybe written things on the board, but they wanted me to lecture them for two hours.” This pressure was overwhelming for Shelley and she withdrew from teaching HE.

Shelley recognised a lack of confidence in herself: “It was more my confidence rather than actually my ability that I felt out of my depth with the level. I felt that the level as too high. I wasn’t confident with –that I was delivering at the right level.” This aligns to some of Young’s participants, who lacked confidence with the level of HE to begin with (2002). “I think I’m scared by the academic level, that someone will turn around and say ‘I’m as clever as you and you shouldn’t be teaching me.’” Shelley’s fulfilment revolved around the rewards of teaching FE: “It’s level and my confidence, my comfort zone. I feel really confident with 16-18 year olds” and “I feel qualified enough to do what I do at FE -so I’m happy with the job I do. I know I’m respected. So I like to be in that middle position where I’ve got autonomy to be able to do with my courses what I want to...”. She summarised: “The [FE] workload’s become a lot more stressful, but in the classroom I am very happy. I never, ever was when I taught HE. I felt jittery and scared from the minute I walked into the HE classroom until the minute I left”. Shelley found autonomy in the more structured FE environment which suggests that the relationship between power and control is personal and felt differently by individuals. This freedom can be more difficult than being controlled (Clarke, 2009). Deci and Ryan suggest that some personalities prefer the controlling environment rather than the informational environment which allows freedom of choice (1985).



Shelley's view may be in line with other FE lecturers who had made decisions not to teach HE, and it is a limitation of this study that their views are not represented here. Some of the other participants felt that their FE colleagues were not keen to teach HE and participants recognised themselves as a minority within their settings. Val: "One of the girls that actually I did my study with, she, so we trained at the same time. We did exactly the same thing. She stayed in FE and I came up here [to the HE centre]. She said 'I'd be too scared to go to HE. It's too much... it's too much expected of you. I couldn't do it.'" Rick also recognised links with academic confidence: "I think there is an element of fear... they've found their feet through Cert Ed and actually discovered an element of academic potential... but then to teach it –you can see the fear". He gave an example of an FE lecturer with strong vocational skills that almost echoes Shelley's experience: "There's a beauty therapy teacher called XXX who is bloody brilliant. She's always grade 1, fabulous in the classroom. And I have asked her a couple of times to come and do a couple of little sessions on PGCE and Cert Ed and she has, but you can see the fear and the fear is that oh, this is HE and I'm teaching clever people and I am going to get found out. She isn't of course, because she is really inspiring as a teacher, but I think there is an element of that".

There was a contrasting view that teaching HE was perceived by some colleagues as easier than FE, because of fewer behaviour management issues. Georgina observed: "Someone who has just started teaching on it [the PGCE] this academic year has found it really challenging I think –thinking that 'oh they're adults, they'll be easier, they'll float through, they're ready for it' and it's the opposite has happened." Similarly, Bernie commented on the attitude of her husband who taught FE and thought: "we have an easy life". Despite this

however, he did not want to switch to teaching HE: “He thoroughly enjoys his job and that is where he wants stay. He’s got no desire to come over here whatsoever”. Bernie felt that people find their “niche” and once they are in a comfortable place, they stay. To be a HE in FE lecturer, they need to enjoy the field or sub-field of HE in FE. The way individuals find their place in these fields of FE, HE and the sub-field of HE in FE, suggests that there are personal struggles at play, but these participants appear very aware of the fields and the demarcation of FE and HE and they do not automatically sit within both.

A lack of colleagues in FE willing to teach HE was welcomed by some of the participants: “There’s a shortage within the department of people who are comfortable teaching HE which has been, I suppose you could say, to my advantage” (June). June gave similar reasons pinpointing a lack of academic confidence in her colleagues who found it “quite threatening”. For June, it was an advantage that she was able to specialise in HE within FE. She felt that the situation “allows me to teach subjects that are most personal.” Her advantage emerged from the lack of confidence in colleagues to teach HE as it perpetuated and facilitated June’s access to areas of her self-practice that she finds most fulfilling. Whilst this did not involve direct manipulation, it reduced June’s incentive to encourage others into this space which June coveted. June appears to maintain the cultural capital where possible and keeps these fields apart, in order to perpetuate an advantageous situation.

## Marking

Marking was a self-practice that almost all of the participants regarded as difficult because of the time consuming nature and the short-turnaround windows. Val recognised the personal struggle with marking, actually describing it as a “massive struggle, massive. One of the classes that we teach is 32 students. So we had 32 three and a half thousand words essay that’s just one class. I’m...and it’s difficult because you...you know want to give everyone a feedback they deserve”. This showed that there was again a feeling of meeting expectation and accountability. Val was willing to work through the night to clear her workload: “So I just did an all-nighter just to get rid of it. Because I just...because I wasn’t moving on to another class and I had another seven classes worth to mark and I’ve got two weeks to do it”. There is no fulfilment in the marking, with Val describing the need to ‘get rid of it’ unlike the feelings around preparation which carried so much pleasure. The feelings of concern extended to the marking time taking away from planning and preparation for the next lectures: “But that just, it makes me panic because I’m thinking, I’m marking, the week’s going and I’m not prepping for the next bit.” Consequently, the marking is taking away time from the pleasurable planning aspects of the role and threatening autonomy.

The marking workload meant that Georgina had feelings of resentment and loss at missing out on friends and holidays: “You do get resentful about it eventually. There are loads of other things I’d love to be doing in the times that I’m sat at home marking and all my friends will ask me to go places and I’m like, ‘I can’t, I’m marking this weekend.’” However, she acknowledged that some of the drive to do this was down to her own need not to feel that

work was backing up: “I get two or three weeks to mark a set of scripts, but if I leave it two or three weeks then I’ve got three lots of scripts to mark. So I’m one of those that feel I just need to get it done and out of the way because the next lot is coming in the next weeks.”

Georgina imposed her own marking turnaround and felt that the consequences of getting work back late were not good for the students: “Nobody monitors it. The only thing that possibly could happen is if students complained that they weren’t getting the work back. I mean, our students know that me and my team like to get the work back to them quick and especially, because if they do have more work to do on it, it is helpful for them.” Georgina had given herself a marking window of one to two weeks depending on moderation and recognised that this had led to a demanding student expectation: “But they get used to that, you see, and ever... if we were ever ill and they didn’t get it back they’d be going, ‘Where is it, where is it? I want it back.’” Georgina suggested that her methods were creating behaviours in the students and this is an example of the lecturer identity directly affecting student identity in the ways that others have said is likely (Burkhill, et al., 2008; Ashwin, 2009).

Marking was generally done away from the office in personal space and time. June found that her office, which was open plan and shared with many others, was too busy to mark in and Tina found the environment too noisy: “I probably do more of it [marking] at home than in the building because of noise. I’m in a very busy office. The phone you know, I have a phone on my desk which I am not supposed to ignore”. Stacey also recognised difficulties with marking workload: “I don’t try and mark here. I can only do it at home. There’s definitely not time with the amount of hours you’re teaching -definitely not enough time.

And then fitting in all your other appointments and doing your appointments with students. I spend a significant amount of time at home working". The work at home was evenings and weekends, but Stacey justified this as just part of the expectation of the role: "I mean in my own time -yeah, definitely in my own time. My lessons wouldn't be as dynamic as they are. The feedback wouldn't be turned around within the correct turnaround time [ ] in some cases where you teach 30 plus students, and we teach for 20 hours or 25 hours a week -it's full time. And you know you try to turn that around in a three-week turnaround. I think it's physically impossible sometimes to do that". Cynicism and despair around the high workload was a common experience amongst the participants, yet here it was wrapped with language describing her teaching as dynamic.

Tina felt that there was a contradiction in messages from management in relation to marking: "It's funny because whenever we have staff development days, they always put sessions all about work-life balance and how we should focus on our families. But then, you're still expected to mark 85 assignments in two weeks and still teach full time and, you know." This was a common theme, Eddie found: "There's such a pressure all the time, marking has to involve me locking myself away from my children on a Sunday night in a darkened kitchen with a laptop, and a light, and a pen, and it's all done at home. It's all done outside of class, outside of college". As with Stacey, earlier in relation to preparation, feelings of guilt and missing out on time with family were raised: "There comes a time when a 5-year-old just wants to stick ice cream on my head and play, and play football, and there's times I have to say to them: "Sorry mate, I got 15 assignments tomorrow for 9 o'clock tomorrow morning." More than any other self-practice, marking raised issues

around workload and here Eddie demonstrated that his identity as a father competed unsuccessfully with the need to complete marking –an ethico-political struggle.

Several participants raised the differences in marking FE and HE work as an important factor for their workload. Stacey's view was echoed by several: "I think it takes a lot longer to mark a three and a half thousand-word level six essay to a BTEC or... or whatever 500 words leaflet or poster. And to give constructive feedback takes time. And they give...they're just giving P's, M's and D's or whatever it is. And not having to give that constructive feedback to help the student improve the grades. It does take time".

For Shelley, the lack of comfort she felt with the teaching was reiterated around the marking level: "The other thing I found hard with the HE, I know that again, I didn't feel as happy as I do with FE was the marking, and not the time because I spent a lot of time marking FE. I found it was much more someone's judgment, I think at FE there's a lot more criteria, it's a lot easier to decipher the level of that learner's work, whether it's a passed level or merit level distinction. I found it really hard and I spent a lot of time marking the Higher Ed work." Shelley had used a colleague to mentor her with the marking: "We marked together and then we went on agreement and that made me slightly more confident marking the others. [ ] It just seems so much more important as well, to get it right at that level, people who invested a lot of money, people trying to forward their own career at this stage and it seems so important as to go with that on kind of my own conscience." Again, links to fee-paying students and expectations emerge around the accountability of marking (Morley, 2003). Fees for HE have escalated and FE remains largely

free, and whilst the FECs may charge less for their HE than traditional HEIs (Bathmaker, 2015), the pressure for the HE in FE lecturer is increased against the non-paying FE majority.

### **Self-practices around research, scholarly activity, qualifications and publications**

Seven participants already had Master's level degrees and Bernie was studying for an MA. Tracey was studying for a PhD. There are limitations for generalising from a small sample, but this suggests that, despite the rhetoric, HE in FE lecturers cannot all be defined by their lack of scholarliness (Creasy, 2013).

There was a view that there was no time for scholarly or research activity in the traditional sense of HEI practice. The FE college systems dominated and this led to scholarly activity linked to CPD and training. Val: "We have staff training days. But I find they are usually linked to, 'right there's a new system coming in. You need to be aware of what you need to do and which forms you need to fill in and how do you' -you know it's sort of quite corporate in its approach." Walter's setting had five college CPD days which: "in recent years have been filled with things like child protection and quality issues, Ofsted, those sorts of things which have quite an FE focus on them". Feather found a similar view amongst some of his participants around generic CPD for college outcomes rather than individual scholarly interests (2012).

The attitudes towards scholarly and research activity varied. They were linked to fulfilment around where the participant felt that they were in their life, in terms of family commitments and their position on the personal career trajectory. This links to Day and Gu's findings where aspects of teacher identity are related to lifecycle (2010). Walter was

retiring that year: “My future aspiration is to retire here” and he showed no desire to engage in further study or research activity. Further influence came from the benefits, or lack of benefits, offered by their employers in terms of funding, time allowed for study and the likelihood of it being rewarded or even appreciated.

Shelley, had decided she no longer wanted to teach on HE programmes: “I always wanted to do my Master’s and that was also planned, to do the Master’s, but the reason behind it was to then go and teach in HE. Now that I’ve made the decision, I don’t want to teach in HE, it doesn’t interest me in doing the Master’s. I was purely doing it for that reason”. She felt that being in industry and updating her vocational skills would be of more use: “I feel qualified enough to do what I do at FE, and I think it’s more important to update my vocational knowledge than the academic at FE”. Where the participant could see no prospect of reward, that is no extrinsic motivation, and the desire to be scholarly diminishes. Feather (2012) found a similar picture where the dominating FE culture led to a lack of motivation, as well as time, for scholarly activity. This also suggests that there is little intrinsic motivation, the self-determining drive to achieve for personal fulfilment (Deci and Ryan, 1985).

Jim, in his early 50s, had recently completed a PGC in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, and had done an MA many years earlier and had published research papers. He had considered doing a PhD, but felt that a doctorate may not be the most useful or the most interesting way forward for him: “I’m weighing up whether or not it is worth doing the qualification or doing the research.” He suggested feelings of restriction around embarking upon a doctorate: “So, I feel that doing the research itself has more of, this is more



interesting for me than doing a qualification, yeah, because that gives you so much flexibility, whereas doing a qualification would restrict.”

Rick had similar views and experiences: “I’m not sure if I would or not [do a research degree]. I have toyed with it, but there isn’t enough time. And I wouldn’t get any time off to do any of it. It would all have to be in my own time; I’d have to pay for it myself.” The lack of reward is demotivating; Rick felt there would be no reward or appreciation if he were to complete a doctorate: “There isn’t -in FE, there is no recognition, in my experience of HE teaching, of your academic standing”. However, like Jim, Rick had been involved in small scale research projects: “I do it, or have. I’ve done some research with xxxx [University], waiting for it to be published. And actually, I did some work with xxxx [University].” Jim and Rick both had publications so they were capable, and intrinsically motivated to a certain extent, but they found no reward for scholarship and consequently lacked motivation to continue.

June felt that she would like to do a post-graduate qualification and sounded highly motivated, but still unable to embark on such study: “I’m 55 -I still see myself as developing my job, my role, and I’m still really excited about my role. One of my biggest problems is that I do not have, although I’ve got HE certs endless professional, educational, and academic qualifications, I don’t have a post-grad qualification, and that’s purely and simply because this system does not allow me time to do it. I would absolutely like to do a Master’s; I just can genuinely not work out when. So that’s been self-limiting for me.” June has an ethico-political struggle around the desire to gain a Master’s in relation to her high workload. However, she also claimed to read a journal article every week and to spending

high levels of time preparing for teaching. From a social constructionist perspective she is creating a discourse where she spends her time in a scholarly way, but does not tie this in to a qualification. As she said above, it is 'self-limiting'.

Similarly, not taking further qualifications or embarking on research was not necessarily due to an absence of funding for the qualification. Val was given a scholarship by the university where she studied to return for an MA, but felt that she did not have time to do it: "And they gave me a scholarship. I had to take it by this year. And it just ran out. I was doing this project that I wanted to link in with students going out [on placement]. And I just thought, 'I can't do it. I can't.' I'd love to but I'm just thinking you know you've got, your family and you need to you know to do all those things. And I thought I can't, I can't do it all. So if I could afford, if I could to just do half the contract [ie work 0.5] and I will do it in a heartbeat. But I just really haven't quite -you know? (Laughter)". Similarly, Stacey felt that it was not something she could complete at the moment: "There are personal hurdles at the minute."

The reality that more than half of the participants already had a Master's Degree meant that somehow they had managed to create space for scholarly activity in their present role.

Where the possibility of reward was recognised motivation could be high as Rebecca, who had recently completed her MA explained: "I was encouraged and it was partly down to me saying, 'Well, do you think it will benefit me if I did a Master's?' Because I had no intention whatsoever of doing a Master's degree; however, being a lifelong learner, I looked into it."

Whilst Rebecca sees the potential extrinsic rewards, she also appears to have high levels of intrinsic desire, referring to herself as a 'lifelong learner'. This is recognition of her own self-determination. Her outlook was positive: "My line manager agreed and said it could be

part of your staff development to do it. It's over three years and they were happy to support me. So I decided to do it. In view to, in the future, you never know, really know what the future holds. But I thought if I can do it, an MA, it's surely going to help me progress within the university centre and maybe give me other options to teach on other programmes in the future."

Tracey was the only participant who had embarked upon a doctorate. She was in the third year of a PhD and reflected Young's (2002) findings that insecurity motivated some participants to embark on further qualifications: "I'd completed the Master's, so, I kind of did it like the following year. Part of me felt it was a natural progression, but I then found myself teaching Master's levels modules. So, I felt under pressure, I felt ill-equipped to teach Master's level modules when I'd only just got the Master's myself. So, I felt I need to do something for my own subject knowledge. So, that was the main motivation to probably be good for my own students. That was a confidence thing I think." So Tracey recognised the intrinsic reward of feeling more confident following further study. She was also willing to make the personal sacrifices that others felt unable to do. Tracey had not been given any study time for the PhD and after struggling to balance workload, she requested to go to a fractional post.

The struggle continued for Stacey, as the demands of the role of programme leader meant she felt she was being paid less and doing the same amount of work leading to resentment: "So, on my day off, I'd be transcribing interviews or doing interviews or reading. I'd also be engaging with my emails here. So, it didn't feel like it was a day off. And everybody kind of says that. There's the real problem around the fractional positions of a point eight, or a

point six or a point five. If you've got programme leader responsibilities, that's a full time job role." Tracey continued: "So, I felt a bit -almost a bit resentful in some ways that I'd dropped in my salary what, 5, 6, -about 8 grand. You know, so, I dropped a significant amount of money which then makes your quality of life at home that little bit more of a struggle, in order to do the study. But I still thought I was putting in the same amount of time. I physically wasn't here one day a week, but I was making up for it at home just in a different working area." She consequently asked for changes in her workload and consolidated her teaching onto one programme. Tracey was willing to engage in struggles to complete her doctorate, changing her working hours and consequently salary. Tracey showed high levels of reflexivity as she created change in areas of her life at home and in work in order to cope; she was able to change the discourse around several elements of her self-practices in order to succeed.

Some participants considered further qualifications in relation to applying for lecturing roles in traditional HEIs. This was similarly articulated by those who had not got a Master's Degree and by those who had a Master's but did not have a doctorate. Stacey: "I wouldn't even consider applying for a job within a traditional university until I got my Master's." Eddie who had completed a Master's degree over ten years earlier, felt that he would need a PhD to work in a university. "Every job I've seen advertised you have got to have a PhD, you've got to be working towards PhD, you've got to be published, you've got to have a -you know, all of these things that at the moment I don't feel I have." Eddie recognised his lack of confidence: "See you've always got this you know, level of doubt as to whether or not you can ...you could punch at that level you know, and that's a common feeling across FE.

Would anyone of us, with what we have, be able to walk into a university and hold our own with these you know, experts of their field, and deliver just as well as they can?" Eddie demonstrates a notion of collective feeling and common features when he uses the term 'any one of us'. It appears that the boundaries between HE in FE and HE in a HEI are clear to Eddie and serving as limitations to him.

Eddie refers to his working-class roots suggesting a conscious awareness of his background and the links to how he behaves. Yet, whilst the field is important this does not fully explain the process of his thinking. Here, using the social constructionist theories of language and second-level discourses, it appears that Eddie is creating discourses and engaging in ethico-political struggles in relation to his teaching identity within the field of HE in FE (Infinito, 2003a; Clarke, 2009).

Eddie had recently had a prize-winning academic article which was presented at a conference: "When I submitted the article for the technology conference, at xxxx University] and it won a prize I went back and they [his HE in FE students] were all like, "Wow!" and I'm like it wasn't anything special, but they seem to be really proud of me. They seem to be really quite thrilled that this guy that teaches them half seven until nine had submitted something to the university and he won". So he has the ability to create cultural capital to cross the 'porous boundaries' of the fields (Bathmaker, 2015, p68) and yet continues to create a reality that maintains his position within HE in FE.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen that generally participants emphasised just how much they enjoyed the self-practices of the HE in FE role, especially the teaching. Throughout the sample, there was only Shelley who did not enjoy teaching HE in FE, but she was keen to clarify that she really did enjoy the FE work.

As well as pleasure in teaching, further themes emerging from this analysis are the high workload in preparing and marking, compounded with feelings of fear over accountability and the fee-paying student. The analysis of self-practices has shown that there is an awareness amongst the participants of how they deal with the demands of the role, their limitations and confidence levels. The participants were scholarly in many aspects, with high amounts of time given to preparation for teaching their subject at this level. More than half had a Masters and the others were keen to embark on one, but felt a lack of time prevented this. Those with Masters considered PhDs, and positions on this were linked with aspiration, confidence, reward and time.

There are struggles between home life and the identity of parenthood with the requirements of the role. With some areas where compromise could be reached and others, such as marking, where guilt and resentment bubbled under the surface. The participants recognise their own struggles and have a reflective awareness at times of how they are creating their own reality in relation to student expectation and workload. They harboured feelings of guilt, pressure and cynicism and yet, due to the autonomy they find in the HE in FE curriculum and classroom, they enjoy their job and themes of positivity and

fulfilment emerge as key motivators. In Chapter Six there is a closer analysis of the participants' reflections on their positioning within the HE in FE context.

## **Chapter Six: Self-Practices [II]: positioning, context, environment and pedagogy**

This chapter offers an analysis of the reflections and opinions that the participants held about the nature of HE in FE. It contextualises their self-practices, which were explored in the previous chapter. Participants considered nuances around their settings, the students and prevalent FE cultures, and reflected on their attitudes and emotional responses. These give rise to reflections on pedagogy and shed light on teaching and learning interactions and the ways in which the identity of the lecturer links to the emergent student identity. The notions of discourse creation and the revelation of personal struggles in the creation of the self are explored. This analysis considers how the participants lived out their role and lived with their role, creating and ‘interweaving’ professional and ‘personal’ projects (Clegg, 2008, p6). The individual describes and presents themselves to others in a range of contexts which shows the subjective and positioned nature of the experience, in relation to past and desired future. Elements of agency are revealed and an awareness of available discourses with which to associate are evident, as Clegg found in her study (2008).

### **Positioning the self in relation to job role description**

In order to determine how the individuals reflected upon their identity in terms of the term ‘teacher’ and ‘lecturer’ the participants were asked how they described themselves to others when asked what they do for a living. There was a varied approach in responses. Some participants were concise on this, but others expanded in detail on the intricacies of definitions and their nuanced positioning in relation to these professional role descriptors.



Several participants felt that they varied how they described themselves according to their audience. Val: “I tend to differentiate it on who I’m speaking to (laughter) if it’s sort of my family then I’m a teacher and I don’t say lecturer, but if I’m being more formal and explain what I do and then I say lecturer.” Val reflected on this: “I can’t explain why I do that. I sort of play it down a little bit with your family. It’s sort of their perception of what they think the lecturer is. I mean that’s the description of my post, but I don’t lecture, I teach.” This suggests posturing and reflexive thinking (Giddens, 1991) and the conscious creation of discourses around personal identity formation and ethico-political struggles (Clarke, 2009).

Tracey had a similar view: “I might say I work in education and then it’s up to the individual if he’d want to ask any further, but I would, more commonplace, I would say I’m a teacher.” She noted that in her teaching on the Cert Ed and PGCE “we never use the word lecturer on the course and we’re training them to be post-compulsory lecturers. [ ] Why is it the people I work for think I’m a lecturer, my students think I’m a lecturer, why is my own self-identity a teacher? I can’t really answer that.”

Tracey continued to analyse her position and the links to her background: “I think that probably, I think a lot of my identity comes from leaving school at 16 with no qualifications and I think a lot of things go back to that point for me. And I think you know if my family background had been different, but again, you know my parents are the type of people that think if you have an education you think you’re better than everybody else.” Tracey continued to reflect on her parents: “I would never use the word lecturer in front of them. You feel like they think you’re going to give a lecture and I think that’s what it is.” Tracey recognised the struggle with herself and thought that she may have a different experience

to others: “Maybe because their background was quite different and maybe their parents were educated they would have always perceived themselves as being a lecturer.”

However, the overview of parental background in Chapter Four showed similarities around working class background of the participants. Tracey also pointed to her route through FE: “My identity has stayed with me even though I have made the transition into HE. My identity has been instilled in me from my years in FE.” So the boundary between FE and HE was crossed, but she takes elements with her from FE into HE.

Walter also introduced himself in terms of his profession in various ways according to whom he was speaking: “It depends who I’m speaking to actually. Sometimes, I do what my mother used to do when she answered the phone and go to the top end and say I’m a lecturer. But for the majority of people I wouldn’t... I describe myself as a teacher.” Walter went on to explain elements of the personal struggles that he had in terms of how he perceived other people’s view of his professional identity: “Some people look upon teaching in a college of further education as something lesser, often, than teaching in a school, because it’s assumed that you wear a white coat and sort of teach people to carry out particular skills and things.” For Walter, there is a stigma which is attached to the role and the setting of an FEC. Goffman (1963) found that individuals manipulated and postured in order to conceal ‘stigma’. Walter appears to be taking the reverse position to Val and Tracey by having concerns that people may think he is in a demeaning role and this demonstrates how personal perspective positions identity. Walter showed some low self-esteem around his perception of the role: “I sometimes outline what I do so the people understand the sort of work that I do [ ] the worst are people in secondary education.” His

use of the term 'worst' suggests that he perceives negative opinions in others in relation to the status of FE and this may be a reflection of his own negative view of the skills-based 'white coat' FE lecturer that he wants to distance himself from. "I find with many of them, particularly teaching business in a vocational context, that they're less experienced than I am and yet they tend to look down upon me because I teach in an institution like this rather than if I taught at a university."

Walter developed a nuanced hierarchical view of his position and was keen to make it clear that he did not present himself to others as teaching in a university: "A lot of people I was at university with ad-hoc developed, professional jobs, tend to differentiate between universities as well [ ] I would never describe myself as an Oxford don because simply... and I would never describe myself as a university lecturer. But I sometimes do describe myself as a lecturer and I teach on Foundation Degree programmes predominantly [ ] for most people I'm chatting to in day-to-day living I would describe myself as a teacher" which is evidence of positioning and manipulating according to audience (Goffman, 1963). It also suggests that HE in FE is lacking an identity itself and that this relatively new marginal space lacks clarity and definition for those outside and within.

For some participants being a 'lecturer' implied that they may not be a good teacher. Eddie: "I don't think I teach in a lecture kind of mould, my HE stuff is more, -because I'm secondary [QTS] trained I think my mentality has always been interactive. It's got to be live, it's got to be vibrant, it's got to be fun. I think sometimes you can remove that level of interactive fun and enjoyment for a lecture type scenario but as a teacher, which I call myself, as I can have that going on in FE and HE." This is a personal perspective of university lecturing being

different to his teaching and the ethico-political struggle in relation to his subjectivity towards the associated identity with the terms and he is more confident with the term 'teacher'. Eddie, who referred to his 'working-class background', appeared to have a lack of confidence in meeting the expectations of being termed 'lecturer': "I think there's more of an opinion that a lecturer is much more HE grown up. You've got research, you've got a background in being able to work at a level that maybe a teacher dealing with 12 year olds can't." Despite having recently published, he avoided letting this place himself alongside HEI lecturers; he appears content in HE in FE.

However, the idiographic methodology of IPA does reveal the differences between participants. Bernie enjoyed using the term 'lecturer' despite recently having been a primary school teacher: "Feels like a little bit more grown up which is quite funny (laughter) because I think, because you're teaching grown-ups [ ] because 'teacher' seems to imply for me anyway, younger children". Bernie, who was in her first year of teaching HE in FE, had found an aspect of fulfilment in using the term lecturer over teacher, suggesting that where self-esteem is higher, individuals may be more confident in taking on the identity of 'lecturer'. This view contrasts with Eddie's and shows the positioning of their own identity in a reflexive manner and they are not always tied to their previous field (Giddens, 1991).

Rebecca also found variations in how people responded to her according to how she described her role: "I'll say I'm a lecturer in education. Teaching on a BA Honours Degree on behalf of xxxx University. I think it sounds quite impressive. (Laughter) So that's what I tend to say I do. If they quiz me anymore, I'll say also, my main job, my day job is a programme leader for the Assessor and Verifier unit; doesn't sound perhaps so grand." Rebecca is

demonstrating aspects of fulfilment in her identity and confirming that she manipulates the description in order to reinforce a particular identity. Rebecca added: "If you say you teach on a particular course – when I used to say I teach on Travel and Tourism, they said, 'Oh, lovely!' But when I say I taught in Business and Legal Study, it sounded, they were very impressed, and when I say now I teach on a, a degree programme, 'Wow! Really?' You know? I don't know whether it's people's impression of working within the university centre that sounds impressive or the fact that you're working on a degree programme on behalf of xxxx University that sounds impressive, but there are always, people have always, been very impressed." Rebecca shows high esteem and confidence in her identity and uses positive language to create the discourse around her identity and that of the HE in FE lecturer.

Stacey showed less confidence, feeling that her institution was not seen clearly or fully understood in the community. "There's this perception that if you teach at this college you work at xxxx site, you're teaching 16 to 20 year olds [ ] you have to explain that there are different campuses and you do teach degrees. [ ] People say 'oh so you get them ready to go to university?' You say 'no, I'm teaching them at university level' and [they say] 'Oh, I didn't know that happened, really?'" Stacey felt that people remained unconvinced that she was correct: "You still see it when you look at them; 'that's not a university' there's definitely that; 'oh, she's making it up.'" "As soon as you say the word 'university' suddenly 'oh, you must be clever then mustn't you?'" Stacey has some resentment in relation to how others view her role. She extends discussion with people in order to be associated with the notion of HE over FE. Stacey chooses language and tries to create a

positive discourse, reinforcing it in her communications with others. This is further evidence that HE in FE itself lacks identity within communities.

There were opposing views in relation to how Stacey and Tina, in the same setting, felt that others perceived themselves. Stacey claimed: “We are also working with people who come from social work backgrounds and health and social care backgrounds. They see themselves as carers and social workers...” Tina had the opposite view: “The people that I work with here who were social workers and carers who’ve now come into lecturing, I think they see themselves as lecturers not still as social workers.” Further evidence that identity is a negotiated process which is subjective and, consequently, experienced in different ways with participants experiencing multiple realities (Dent and Whitehead, 2002). Rick felt that there was a tendency for those coming to teach in FE to maintain the identity of their vocation. “I often hear poorly performing teachers hide behind their vocation.” He regarded this as something that should be addressed before people could become good teachers, which is in line with Wenger’s theories on communities of practice (1998).

Georgina, previously a primary school teacher appeared to ‘hide behind’ her previous vocation. She varied how she described herself in relation to the expectations her colleagues or managers may have in terms of taking on further duties: “I’m just a teacher, I keep saying that when people are talking to me about data and success rates and all the mathematical side of my little management role and I just hate it all [ ] it’s sitting in front of spreadsheets and dealing with people and their issues and I’m just a teacher, that’s all I see myself as that.” When introducing herself to those external to the setting, Georgina felt that: “it depends how much I can be bothered to say [ ] it depends what I think the person

will understand. [ ] On our contracts that [lecturer] is what we're called, but we call each other teachers." Georgina felt that this might not be accepted in a university and recognised a probable need to change her language and create a new reality: "I might have to start calling myself a lecturer if I did [work at a university]. I might get my hands slapped when I'm at university." Georgina's reflection shows a nuanced understanding of the audiences and personal struggles in relation to her professional identity and her willingness to manipulate and position herself in order to maintain control over her self-practices. Unlike Eddie, she suggests an ability to move between the fields of HE in FE and HE in HEI, which bolsters the usefulness of this type of study delving deeply into the differences between participants.

The theme emerging is that of positioning the self, which takes place on an individual level. The use of IPA allows the idiographic detail to emerge within this theme, showing that whilst there are similarities in behaviour, that is they are all positioning and appear aware that they do this, it is personal. The context around their background and self-esteem appear to show a spectrum of opinion on where they sit in relation to where they want to sit or be seen to sit.

### **The participants' views of HE in FE teaching**

Generally, there was a shared view that the teaching and student learning experience that they offered on their programmes was different and better than traditional HEIs. Val felt "we definitely teach differently here". There was a feeling that aspects of FE 'culture' and the nature of their students' needs dominated and drove the delivery of HE along FE terms,

and consequently this affected their timetables, teaching practices and the student experience. As discussed earlier it was intended by successive governments, that the place of HE in FE should grow as part of the WP agenda and given the background of the students likely to attend the courses, special provision and extra support are needed (Parry et al. 2012).

Although it should be noted that some students are very capable and actively choose FE and HE in FE without conforming to WP typology, the majority of students on these programmes were unlikely to be amongst the students who would automatically consider HE as an option –choosing to apply to established universities as a matter of course (Chowdry et al. 2013). June felt that they offered a better quality experience for the students: “my students who do their top-up elsewhere do come back and say, and it’s been really nice to hear them say this, that academically and from a learning perspective, the quality they receive from us was equitable to and invariably better than they receive further on”. This is an area of fulfilment or endpoint for June appears to reinforce her teaching methods. The ability for the student to transfer between HE in FE and HE in a HEI is important and difficulty in negotiating between these sectors is potentially an issue (Greenbank, 2007).

### **The environment and resources**

Several participants linked teaching and learning to the quality of their environment and resources and unlike Young’s (2002) sample, they were generally pleased with their classrooms and facilities. This study was carried out more than ten years after Young’s (2002) study and it is possible that the resources have generally improved in this time, and



some other studies suggest there has been investment (Simmons and Lea, 2013; Dhillon and Bentley, 2016). Rebecca was in a recently built building: “They’re here in a fantastic building -it’s not a university per se but they’ve made a really good effort to look like a university with student union, there’s a union bar; they’re doing lots of activities, fantastic things, almost like university life.” Val’s setting had also had major investment and she felt that there was a HE atmosphere in her setting: “I actually feel when I am here this is HE and it’s the university”. However, she had some areas of concern where students did mix with the 16-18 year olds on the same campus: “I just think when you’re doing something that you’re paying for, you know, you should be able to have quiet -sit down in the library and have some peace and there isn’t that.” June’s setting had “a separate physical domain” even though it was not in a special HE centre. She described her teaching rooms as “fantastic” with high-spec resources such as interactive whiteboards.

By contrast, there were very few HE programmes in Georgina’s FE setting and there was no special HE area. She had some concerns for her students’ experience: “In the refectory they mix with all the other students; I think they thought they would get special treatment because they were, they used to say all the time, ‘we’re paying for this, we’re paying for it’ and one or two did mention ‘oh if we were at university we wouldn’t have all these kids everywhere’ but since then I think the groups have just got used to being in with the other students.” This further demonstrates the notion of students as customers and the link to paying fees (Morley, 2003).

## **The participants' views of the academic environment**

Eddie felt that the academic identity of any university was a significant part of the student experience, and that the HE in FE students did not get the same deal. Eddie: "Well read, well written, published; the guys that are at a university campus have got all of that; the experience, the overall experience of being part of a HE environment." It is generally argued that the research element of HEIs is absent from the staff and therefore student experience in HE in FE (Creasy, 2013; Simmons and Lea, 2013). Paradoxically, Eddie's students did have, through him, experience of some of those academic features of HE in HEIs that he felt were absent in HE in FE. Despite his personal lack of confidence, he felt that universities were not offering something better: "it's just a different beast and a different level of expectation from the audience". This was in line with the view of other participants and the views emerging from some other studies (Burkhill, et al, 2008).

Rick felt there were positive outcomes for HE in FE settings, as the students were the focus; whereas on the whole "universities aren't places first and foremost for students. They're really just a bi-product. They're there for research. I know that's broad, but that is their primary role, to accumulate academics who can do research which is meaningful and furthers our existence as humankind." This fits with the most traditional definitions of Higher Education (Barnett, 2000). However, Rick felt that when he went to the HEI partner they discussed and reflected: "...examining what we do, it's just quite nice; whereas here, that doesn't actually happen at any level. There are people who teach HE here but we never meet up to talk about the HE-ness of what we do".

There appears a lack of identity for HE in FE in Georgina's and Rick's settings. The need to develop HE-ness for HE in FE lecturers is recognised as an issue by Simmons and Lea (2013) and highlighted as an area for development particularly in small FECs. Similarly, for Jim, FE context emerged as a restrictive element holding back the development of HE: "I don't think there is a real sense of recognition of the demands of HE, in a standard typical FE college. I think there are lots and lots of things that need to be done in order to build a HE culture. But the context itself is always going to be a limiting factor in that in terms of the HE culture - it only exists in the minds of the people who are trying to develop HE initiatives and so on". Jim appears to acknowledge the creation of multiple realities for different people in the same setting.

Tina felt that because the management originated from FE they had a limited knowledge of the HE lecturer's role due to their own lack of experience in this area: "It's their understanding of what is expected of their HE staff. I don't think the understanding is good enough of the difference in their roles [ ] We are expected to carry out an HE role but again with an FE ethos." Tina also held the view that it would be different in a university: "I think all the campuses that are university campuses, those kinds of things [administration] are dealt with by other people. Therefore, they're not impinging on your teaching and your planning time".

Based on her own experience of studying for a Foundation Degree in the college she now works in, followed by a top-up in a university, she said "I felt like I was at college when I was here and I felt like I was at university when I was at xxxx [university]." Tina based this on issues other than teaching, including the level of support, facilities such as the library, and

“students that you’re studying with” because the 16-18 year olds “don’t behave as most university-level students behave.” Tina felt that even the name ‘xxxxx College’ had an impact as students “don’t say I’m at xxxxx University and I think that in itself, you know, it’s like we said before about the words that you use, it’s -that kind of gives you a picture of where you’re studying.” Tina felt that the students carry this out through language “because when they talk about being at college, not being at university, they refer to themselves ‘When I’m at college, I do this -they don’t necessarily use the word “university”.’ Tina felt that the students chose the language or discourse of college rather than the university centre suggesting, literally, that the language is creating the reality and therefore the discourse around HE in FE.

### **The FE environment: student need and expectation**

There was a common concern about the amount of support that their students needed, because they had come from mostly level 3 vocational programmes. These had not involved academic study in the way that traditional A’level students had experienced. Georgina explained that on her Foundation Degree programme: “Some of them have come through the NVQ route so they’re not used to deadlines, they’re not used to writing, they’re not used to spelling and grammar being correct, they’re not used to researching, referencing”. The level was so low that the students were not capable of the work: “We’ve had a group of Foundation Degree students who have been a really basic level when they started ...we’ve just really got them to a point where they can write an assignment and that is right at the end of year one”. The discourse remains around the importance of teaching and student achievement, with the onus on the participant to support the student, an

attitude that fits with notions of FE culture where failing students is considered unacceptable (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005; Simmons and Lea, 2013).

Several of the participants commented on the way in which student expectation drove the underpinning methods and approaches of their teaching and support. Shelley felt: "There's become an expectation with one-to-one when a couple of students ask for a little bit of support then it becomes an expectation." Georgina believed that her methods created students who were keen to seek help and formed a reliance on tutors. "They're so demanding now - I think we've created monsters, definitely." She felt this was due to the way in which her and a colleague had over nurtured students in the early days of the Foundation Degree: "Myself and xxxx were so nurturing to them and we wanted them to be successful so much, we put so much time into them, and whenever they were sending demanding emails and phoning us we'd both be there for them and it sort of carried on through the more people that come on that know those other people that have been on it, you know, they ...they're good promoters because they will say 'go to the tutors they're so nice and lovely and they'll help you and they'll do this, that and the other for you' but it's not good for us really." Georgina recognises her part in creation of the reality around student support and the workload.

Val observed a similar culture where, even during half term, "even though we possibly shouldn't, we are still available to them, if they want to come and knock on the door and say 'right I'm stuck with this can you help me?'" She felt that students had "no qualms about coming to find you". Val seemed totally accepting that she would then offer the support "you say go on then, let's have a look" and that "if someone is struggling we'll say 'come and

sit with me for half an hour, you know, we'll sort it all out for you." The creation of the discourse around levels of support is repeated across staff and institutions. As other recent studies suggest it could be the case that the HE in FE tutors are indeed purposefully specialising in this type of delivery for marginal and widening participation students (Burkhill et al., 2008; Meredith, 2013; Kadi-Hanifi and Keenan, 2016). Referring to Foundation Degree students, June felt that in her setting she was working with "highly motivated students" and that this did mean that a "number of them who take a lot more of my time on a personal tutorial basis and require a lot more support." This high level of motivation is perhaps recognition of the 'agency' of the students as they seek out settings that can offer the support they need (Stoten, 2016).

A key element to the context of HE in FE colleges that emerged from the participants is that as well as being non-traditional university entrants, these students have often progressed from a range of FE courses at the same setting, with colleges directly marketing their own HE courses to these potential internal customers. Consequently, the college is part of their lived experience and their own background by the time they enter the HE level programmes. These students have already become familiar with the systems of the institution and have established relationships with staff, and this sets the tone for external students joining the cohort as Shelley explained: "The ones that expect that extra support because they've had that during their level three programme at the college and then those that have maybe come from outside, maybe from industry, straight onto the Foundation Degree, and [they] tend to follow suit and think that that's normal getting the additional support".

Walter observed that “you get a lot of students who come up through a BTEC route and then go on to a vocational degree in the college and if it’s the same [teaching] team, it is more difficult for the team to create more of an HE atmosphere because the students just see it as a sort of continuation and it’s difficult to change the culture.” Walter felt that this was perhaps less likely to happen in larger colleges where they have created separate HE centres and have “different buildings, different cultures.”

Staff in the HE centres actually reported the same phenomenon with Stacey experiencing a similar situation: “We get quite a lot progressing particularly because of the area we’re in. We’re in a very deprived area. A lot of people here can’t afford to go away, do the traditional routes to university. So we do get the level threes coming up and I think for some of them, they will, especially for three hours, they’ll find it very, very difficult to stay in a lecture theatre.” Similarly, in another HE centre, Rebecca felt that progression targets from the FE section placed pressure on them to take their FE students on the HE programmes when they were not suitable. These students, she felt, “come with that mentality, some of them –not all- and those traits and that lack of attendance and their behaviour issues, that baggage comes with them... it takes them [the lecturers] a while to get them [the students] out of that FE mode into a university mode.” Rebecca’s language suggests that she approaches this situation with the belief that she can change the behaviour.

Jim had a very positive view of the FE environment in terms of the outcomes for students: “Many students will have a better experience of learning their subject in an FE institution and therefore come out maybe better informed, better grades and so on.” He felt that, due to the input and the awareness of student needs, the quality of work that the students

produced, and the grades achieved when compared to their partner university's was "often seen as being at least as good as or if not better than a lot of the work that's produced by some of the university based students." Walter held similar views: "I sort of moderate across the network, including the university on a couple of modules so I see the standard of work that comes in and despite the fact that I don't have those research interests, and so far as this programme is concerned, I don't think our students lose out. I think they do quite well in sort of many ways". Jim and Walter reinforce positive discourses around the student experience and student outcomes.

Some of the participants raised impenetrable features of the FE system as restrictions that they perceived would not be seen in a university setting, such as targets for retention, success and attendance. This is not necessarily how HE in HE tutors actually experience their role –with targets and Quality Assurance [QA] and accountability experienced within the HE sector; however, Scott (2010) argued that colleges were subject to more rigorous rules and inspection regimes. Val: "Attendance is a huge thing because the FE attendance rules come over to HE. When I think when I was at uni, if you didn't go to a lecture well it's up to you, you know hard luck you missed it, but we have to speak to the students and say 'where were you yesterday?' Now I don't want to do that. You know they're an adult it's up to them." Val observed that "it puts me in a position where I have to speak to adults like children."

Rebecca, again, created a different discourse and felt that there was a difference in HE in FE as she found in: "[in FE] If there was a particular student that had done a very poor piece of work, you have these targets to pass and you have to achieve these targets regardless and



they, you know, they were sort of, would really then spend lots and lots of time with students here to make sure he or she came up to pass and it would incur lots and lots of extra time sometimes in that staff member's own time to get student A to pass [ ] you have these targets to achieve and you have to achieve these targets regardless." In the HE centre she felt it was different: "It was okay to fail somebody [ ] as long as you follow procedures with that student and give him support and etc., etc., it was okay." Whilst Rebecca had the strength to fail the student in HE she recognised this as only acceptable after support intervention and elements of FE practice are crossing into HE in FE practice.

Jim found that there was some tension between the "level of capacity of the students and the amount of additional support that teachers put in to enable them to get through the qualifications". He considered that on the Cert Ed and PGCE programmes, as trainee teachers, they should have a degree of ability and independence, but there was still "almost an expectation that we try to address the issues". Similarly, with his teacher training students, Rick felt the tension around the academic ability of his students who were going to teach vocational subjects, but had to pass the Cert Ed: "They've you know, they've run a restaurant for 20 years; we want that, that's what we want. So that's what's really valued. Problem really comes when I set the first essay on the Cert Ed and they can't write very well, and that's problematic". This demonstrates a further ethico-political dilemma for the participants as they struggle with the need for integrity around failing a student and the cultural expectation within their setting to support students in succeeding.

Val and Walter, who taught both HE and FE, commented on how they used their HE expectations with FE students –a reversed approach. Val said that when teaching FE: "I

expect them to read, I expect them to get their stuff in on time, I expect them to listen, to participate, to put their phones away you know. Not to wander in and out. That's what I expect and that's what I tell them". She felt, however, that this was not well received by the FE staff: "My expectations of the students it annoys them, because you know that's just because you have that in HE you don't get that here". This suggests that poor behaviour is much more of an issue for FE teaching and HE in the setting may actually raise standards in FE. Dhillon and Bentley found that FEC managers were attracted to elements of HE-ness that HE in FE brought to their colleges (2016).

### **Supporting students in the HE in FE environment**

A context specific element of the FE colleges was the practice of lecturers being on the premises for their fully contracted time, including for marking and planning which gave students easy access to them. Participants from two of the institutions said that they had to leave a message on a board in the staff room if they were going to be off site, others had their timetables on the wall so that it was clear where they were. This gave students easy access to staff at all times of the day. Shelley had similar experiences: "We need to be on hand for cover and we need to be on hand for students and personal students". Val recognised access to staff as a significant difference between them and universities where you "make an appointment" at the lecturer's convenience and not the student's.

Bernie, basing her experience on her own children's university experiences, also felt that she offered high levels of support in relation to universities: "They can contact us on a regular basis and then we'll get back to them straight away. I've still got two children at

university and at the moment they are in lecture halls of 200 people and half of them, you know, half of the lecturers don't know who they are [ ] so it's the personal approach and the supportive approach in such a small setting really". Georgina had Foundation Degree students coming to find her for support in breaks: "I was eating my tea with my half hour break and they came and found me and lined up at my table as I was trying to eat my tea". She was not teaching the group, but they sought her out for support as she was the course leader. Consequently, she changed the timetable and staffing the following year so that she had contact with all of the groups in an attempt to prevent this "because otherwise they'll just hound me anyway." Georgina claimed that this was a very different experience to her university days: "We didn't have any contact with the lecturers outside of college [ ] I would never have gone to a lecturer in my uni for support or anything."

Paradoxically, whilst Georgina felt hounded, she held the view that a "positive thing for students coming to us is that they get that [level of support]." Georgina opts to reinforce the discourse around the support that she offers and shows little struggle in terms of changing her behaviour to meet student need rather than attempting to change student behaviours, which is part of the negotiated aspect of identity. The students become an authority source and Georgina's identity is led by the student demands, reinforcing student identity and creating a discourse around expectation and support and this is an emergent theme.

Tracey felt that modern communication methods had exacerbated the situation: "You get emails -you get emails at all hours of the day now and there's an expectation that you're expected to get back and respond to those students". This was made worse in her experience by a lack of policy: "We have no guidelines when it comes to email practices and

with technology it spills over. You know like I don't- I don't get my work emails on my mobile phone but other colleagues do so what used to be normative practices –everything changes you know". Tracey observed those around her creating the reality of immediate response to student queries and this shows she is questioning the creation of this new normality.

Her major driver to respond, even on leave, was based on a fear of poor feedback and the relation to the increased fees that students were paying: "I think with the fees increasing as well and more emphasis on value for money, we have that pressure all the time, knowing that we're being evaluated, you know so the evaluation forms are going to go out so you're conscious that you don't really want you know, negative feedback". Even when there were "legitimate reasons for why sometimes you can't respond, but it's the job just –it can take over your life so I think the expectations in part, you know, they come from yourself".

Tracey appears to recognise her response as subjective and linked to the student as fee-paying customer.

Tracey had felt this particularly when she had taken annual leave to visit her father who was very ill and the "doctor didn't think he would make it". Yet she still felt a pressure, even at such a time of personal upset: "I knew I wouldn't sleep on the Sunday night if I hadn't gone on my emails and it's like how ridiculous is that? And you know there was like, something like 200 emails which took maybe three hours on the Sunday to get through and it's like why did I do that? I'm on annual leave but I still feel –and again, that's yourself isn't it? But again, if I came in on the Monday morning going straight into class at nine –there wouldn't be any way on the Monday to catch up". This is an ethico-political struggle for Tracey as she feels

guilt and the longing to give her potentially dying father her full attention, but actually takes the time to respond to emails. Tracey reflects finding it 'ridiculous' and recognises it as her self-expectation which had driven her. This is another case of the participant being aware of the way in which they are playing a part in creating the discourse which was apparent in the pressures of meeting marking turnaround times earlier.

### **Student support and links to pedagogy**

The participants felt that students brought a range of issues, which are expected with the WP profile (Chowdry et al., 2013). Eddie commented that "these guys have got families, they've got jobs, they come to college once a week, so it's very much an isolated six hours a week of an HE experience." Jim made similar observations about his students: "They have to balance a range of things, jobs as well as running families". Tracey felt that it was much harder teaching the adult learners on her PGCE programme than it was when she was teaching 16-19 year olds in FE: "I think working with adult learners is a completely different ball game. Just, the problems that come with managing and working with adult learners - the teenagers are just much easier to manage. I was completely in my comfort zone. And I think over here, although it's four years now, sometimes, like nothing prepares you. You know, like with the email I referred to [earlier in the interview], on Thursday, with this woman and she's got a five-year-old daughter and she's alluding to the fact that life isn't worth living dot, dot, dot and it's those pressures." As Kadi-Hanafi and Keenan (2016) recently found, this ability to support this group of students appears as part of the identity of the HE in FE tutor.

Jim felt that the students in FE and HE had similarities in his setting with the differences being more tangible between them and “higher-stage universities then you can have more traditional types of students but in the kind of universities which have more of a wider recruitment base, I think those students will tend to be very similar to the types of students that we get you know, in the FE sector.” Jim had an understanding of where his setting fitted into the widening participation agenda and, like Walter, observed the differences between universities and not just between HE and FE.

The context of the settings and the nature of the students were seen by the participants as fundamental to the way in which they structured the supportive environment. Jim felt that there was “a clear emphasis upon how we teach as much as what we teach” and felt that as HE in FE they were “geared towards supporting students directly -we tend to be more accessible [ ] there is a certain level of support which is possibly more accessible to them in the FE context.” He described what they offered as “like a warm nest kind of thing” due to the FE context which as we saw earlier influenced the teaching methods.

The creation of this ‘warm nest’ starts perhaps with the reality that the students are likely to be in their home town, and not estranged from family, friends and their local community. For instance, Tina had taught some of her students when she was their primary school teacher and they were in her Reception class. Several participants mentioned that one of the satisfying elements of the job was that they saw students that they taught on the FE courses who progress through the levels into HE. Val for instance said: “one of the things that is nice is I’ve got one of the girls who is doing the BA at the moment and I taught her, no there’s two, and I taught them both FE and they’re doing their BA now and I’m teaching

them and that's fantastic. It's lovely to see they've come all the way through it". Seeing the progression through level 3 to HE carried fulfilment for several participants and this fulfilment is an emergent theme.

A further element of creating an environment based on student need was timetabling and the structure of lessons. Several participants mentioned that students were in for a limited time in the week, coming in for a full afternoon or twilight sessions in order to fit around work and family commitments inherent with students on both the Foundation Degree programmes and on the teacher training programmes. It also emerged from the data that the participants recognised other aspects around lesson planning and teaching methods that were part of the context for students studying on their HE in FE programmes.

Tina's institution they had recently changed the delivery format to have a split session with lecture style delivery in the first one and a half hours and then a workshop or seminar in the second half. Tina felt this allowed them to work more closely with the students and offer better support "before the assignments are due in you're able to see which students are struggling, who might need more support." "The way we teach is scrutinised more and more, and that's why we've changed to this new style three hour lessons...what we're looking to see is whether we're looking at better grades from this." She felt that it was already showing results: "we certainly had better return as in more students getting work in on time and not feeling under quite the same pressure." This shows an organisation keen to support the students, but perhaps with an understanding that this is of as much benefit to the college if better results are achieved and performativity measures considered. This is a

strategic form of compliance that appeared in FE as part of the new managerial environment in the 1990s (Shain and Gleeson, 1999).

Similarly, Walter's setting had arranged the timetable around the student's working day by offering evening classes and because the students are tired following a day's work the classes were made very active in the first half and then support based in the second. He felt that in the evening classes, the students need a particular type of teaching incorporating "questionnaires, role play, various other things, because otherwise, the sessions, most of my business [studies] work is in the evening; people have already undertaken a full day's work so you have to, by the watershed of the first break, get the real conceptual work out of the way, and what you have for the rest of the evening is consolidation." He felt that this would not happen in a university: "They wouldn't have that luxury of that length of time for consolidation that we have here."

Whilst this fits with the accepted rhetoric around the supportive environment of HE in FE (Parry et al. 2012; Simmons and Lea, 2013; Kadi-Hanifi and Keenan, 2016) it does not align to McTaggart's study of student experiences where students felt unsupported and had an inconvenient timetable (2016). It is a limitation of this study, that the students' views of these lecturers are not captured.

### **Teaching style for HE in FE**

Eddie was aware that his FE teaching influenced how he taught HE: "What I try to do is the kind of structure of how I teach in FE, so it's kind of chunks of learning, it's kind of checking starter activities, so there's kind of a structure that I always try to follow throughout all my



lessons HE and FE.” He found differences, because the HE student brought more to the classroom in terms of their experience and ability to debate and discuss: “In HE you can open it up to the floor.” So whilst he used some similar teaching styles he recognised the importance of level and ability. “FE in my mind is much more focused on understanding, and skills, and knowledge... whereas HE ... it’s much more of a lecture debate kind of way to teach.”

Rebecca felt that teaching HE could be “very dry” and made a conscious effort to counteract the subject through teaching method. “With my experience of teaching the travel and tourism and I call it this fluffy pink approach to teaching. I’ve tried to make it as interesting and exciting and try to put a little bit of fluffiness in...” This involved not just saying “we’re going to do paradigms and talk about quantitative and qualitative research.” Instead she said that she “tried to incorporate a different teaching method to make the topic more exciting, and I think I’ve been able to do that because of my experiences in the travel industry.” She felt that she had “picked up and got –learned a lot- from FE... I think it is a fantastic grounding for anybody working in the university to come through that FE route.” Rebecca does not consider that she should teach in a more HE way or that the students should get over a need for the ‘fluffy’ approach –creating and affirming the view that HE in FE is something different and some argue that there are risks around this (Creasy, 2013).

## **Conclusion**

The participants see their own identity as linked to their self-practices and their views on teaching and the students. A culture develops around student expectation, in terms of the

level of input from staff in supporting the student through assignment work. The student's confidence in the ability to seek support suggests that they are showing high degrees of agency within the college setting which Stoten found as one of the reasons the students choose HE in FE (2016). They are 'nurtured' in the 'warm nest' (Jim) of the FE environment where they become familiar with the tutors. Small class sizes and students progressing from lower levels within the setting, combined with the availability of tutors who are not free to leave the premises to work on marking or planning elsewhere seems to lead to higher levels of student agency, which rewards the HE in FE lecturer and reinforces the behaviours.

The theme emerging is that the participants felt that the dominating FE practices of the college meant that creating a university experience for the students was not possible, but they also suggested that this was largely not desirable either as it would not meet the needs of their students. These two elements of context and student profile are difficult to separate with each feeding into and from the other; the context created the students and the students created the context. This confirms Clegg's (2011) argument that the hierarchies and social mobility are not easily broken and it supports the view of 'tension between more agentic and more deterministic forms of explanation' that Gewertz and Cribb (2009, p105) point to. In the next chapter there is an exploration of relations with authority sources and how the participants experience the relationships with managers and authority.

## **Chapter Seven: Relationships with authority in the role**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter the relationships with authority are explored, through an analysis of the interview data where participants discussed their feelings on management. The adapted framework for exploring the HE in FE lecturer's identity used to guide this study places authority sources as significant, because of the social constructionist's view that subjection by authority sources on individuals, leads to the development of behaviours and combines with the other aspects of the self. Relations with power sources create freedom as well as restriction (Infinito, 2003b). Analysing the contrasting realms of the controlled culture of FE with the more autonomous culture of HE reveals useful detail on how this marginal space is experienced and links to debates on self-determination and motivation (Deci and Ryan, 1985).

None of the participants were in line-management roles, although some managed their courses and were programme leaders. Discussion around experiences with management came from direct questions and also emerged from explorations of college culture, aspects of workload and personal aspirations. The analysis of the interview texts showed how the participants did indeed have to take care of themselves and that they found ways of using language, positioning and manipulative techniques to maintain certain elements of the role which they enjoyed such as autonomy. As with the previous analysis chapters, the transcription text is interwoven in order to gain idiographic detail and to allow for the

hermeneutic analysis which looks for meaning in the language beyond the first level of interpretation (Smith et al., 2009).

In the first section there is an exploration of the general view of the management of the institution. In the second section there is an analysis of the more personal relations with line managers.

### **The view of management in general**

Val had a close relationship with a member of the management and felt that she had an insight into their views: “Knowing someone in corporate very well. (Laughter) It’s the money that it [FE] attracts, most definitely, this -I’ve been a bit sort of frustrated recently because the certain things that I’ve wanted to do and it’s, “No, we don’t have money for that.” I’m like, “Well, it’s not much.” “But no, we haven’t got -no, there’s no money for that in HE.” Yet I hear, coming from reliable sources that you know they just spent £2,000 on whatever it was for one day for FE.” Val felt strongly that despite having a separate HE centre, the emphasis for the senior management was FE.

Several participants raised the issue that management did not reward academic achievement. They felt that the vocational skills of staff were equally or more valued. Rick said “So there are –and this will sound terrible- but it sometimes really does nark you, you know, there are brickies earning more than me. And they don’t mark they just tick off NVQ criteria while watching their lads lay bricks. Now I don’t want to demean what they do, but I think that I have an argument”. Whilst Rick says he does not want to demean the work of

his FE colleagues, he is demeaning it. He chooses a particular discourse around the nature of FE work and appears to place it in a hierarchy where it is something less.

Walter echoed Rick's view: "I would say, in the management of FE there is not really an understanding of HE, how it works, what the demands are, particularly at conceptual level [ ] at the end of the day a HE lecturer who goes in for, you know, an evening session of say three hours which usually involves formal workshops, case studies, that sort of work, with an assessment programme with that looped up in hours terms, is the same as a skills lecturer, and in paying terms too, who actually would go in with say a menu, demonstrate something, for three hours people watch doing it and assess it in that session. And the currency in FE is hours of delivery. There's a token differential there, but there's not an understanding of why that should be different".

Rick and Walter felt that this was due to the HE in their respective colleges as having the same management as FE, Rick: "They [managers] don't even have necessarily an academic degree level background and consequently can't see what's involved in preparing that sort of session". Rick felt that the lack of reward was a key reason why others in his setting did not aspire to HE in FE: "I think they [FE colleagues] look at HE and think 'that looks like hard work' and fundamentally, you don't –there isn't another contract". He felt that that this was an acknowledged issue: "I mean the unions have argued endlessly that HE should have a different –if you purely teach HE- you should have a different contract and that there should be a slightly different pay scale in acknowledgement of your attainment academically; the expectations of the marking and all of that, but there isn't that at all" this is confirmed in the literature (Parry et al., 2012; Simmons and Lea, 2013).

Based in a HE centre, Rebecca felt that there was a growing recognition that they needed more time for HE work: “And our contracted hours were the same as FE and there was a big sort of discussion which was quite openly discussed between us all after our thoughts and feelings about that. And a lot of us sort of said through consultations at universities, lecturers within a traditional university are allowed more hours and have less teaching time and have more hours for prep and research etc, etc. Whereas we feel we’re a little bit governed by FE because we are HE and FE we’re a little bit governed by that. So those big discussions took place about 12 months ago and it was agreed that our contracted traditional 820 was less. So we had hours then taken off our time table.” There was not a consistent approach across the settings for the amount of extra time –if any- that the participants got for teaching HE compared to the time they got for FE. June’s setting had a system that allowed an extra hour for large groups so for every student over 21 there was an extra hour per year’ so 30 students equated to 9 hours extra in the year. These negotiations over conditions were struggles with authority and on a personal level there were struggles with the self as the participants had to settle for conditions that they felt were unfair. It appears that HE in FE lecturer has the willingness to settle for difficult contractual conditions. However, this must be seen alongside the unwillingness to relocate and a lack of confidence to move into traditional HEIs.

Rebecca explained that there had been a lot of discussion around the workload for staff in their HE centre compared to HE staff in their partner HEI and that some concessions over teaching hours were made by the management: “So I felt personally because I’m still fairly neutral of this. But personally, I felt they had almost met us halfway and they had given,

they had knocked our hours off our time table, a few hours a week which helped. I think the rumbles in the jungle suggests it's nowhere near enough. And they still, we have still no time, which is not what I say but what the staff say, for research or for prep courses."

Rebecca wanted to distance herself from the discontent, suggesting rumours of dissatisfaction from 'the jungle' and 'the staff' as though she sat separately to this. Rebecca also made it clear that she would like to be considered for management, as we saw earlier in Chapter Four, and she appears to be positioning herself in the middle ground. This is an ethico-political relationship with authority, shaping her beliefs and behaviours, and demonstrating here the view that identity involves the relationship with oneself and ethical or political positioning (Clarke, 2009, p191).

Rebecca previously worked in the travel industry and she was keen to point out that she felt her working conditions were good by comparison to her previous roles: "I was quite satisfied because to me, and this is probably where I could be different to other people, I have been working in industry for 20 years where I've worked every hour god sends and not got paid any over time. I've worked Saturdays and Sundays. I've worked Boxing Days, Good Fridays in the travel industry. We've done brochure launches in our own time. You can imagine there are certain times a year where we have customers queuing out the door, we don't get lunch breaks, breaks anything like that. So to me, when I came to college, FE and then over to HE, I honestly thought my Christmas and birthdays have all rolled in to one, I thought it was fantastic what we get". This shows the subjective position of the participant varies and the cynicism and resentment is not experienced by everyone, particularly if *they* hold a desire for management. Theories around communities of practice may also be

significant with the primary professional background strongly influencing Rebecca's views (Wenger, 1998).

In a similar way to the positioning of the self, seen in Chapter Six, there was an idiographic position on this according to personal experience, desires and ambitions. Some participants felt detached from management. Tina saw them as being very FE focused, having come through the FE section of the college into senior roles, and lacking in HE experience. "I wouldn't like to say for definite where all our senior management staff came from or what their background is [ ] they're not going to see the impact of having to do it, how it affects the working hours, if they've never had to do it themselves so I think it's about an understanding of job roles." Tina's perception was that the financial needs of the college drove the focus of the management in a similar vein to Val's view: "I suppose it's about finance. It's about, you know, getting students through the door and getting as many as possible on a programme" which is in line with views on FE culture (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005).

The heavy workload was a constant theme in the study and the FE culture was blamed by most. Tina was locked into a constant cycle of preparation, teaching and marking that could not fit into the working week. "It's not in my control and, I mean, I ended up working last week. I came in for half the term week in March because I just couldn't see any other way of catching up. And I think that's something, you know, that I find that this establishment needs to address, that there isn't any more time given to HE lecturers than FE." This links to previous views on workload pressures discussed in Chapter Five. Tina's experience suggested that she was in a perpetual state of coping with a high workload with no power to



change her situation which was dominated by the FE focus of the managers. “And I suppose, that for me is something that I’d like to improve because it’s really difficult and it’s not going to change. It’s just going to have to be me that changes.” There is inevitability around Tina’s understanding of the unlikely chances of an improvement in the situation and again this is potentially part of the creation of the reality as she appears to create a second level discourse (Smith et al. 2009).

Georgina felt that there were issues with the expectations of management changing according to the willingness and ability of the staff: “So she [Curriculum manager] is in a bit of the mind-set of, ‘I know Georgina will do it so it’s fine’ which sometimes I think it happens a lot in education; people that do work hard and do a good job just get more and more put on them. They don’t ever get things taken off them to make it easier, so it’s just one of those things.” Georgina experienced a culture where those who do not manage their workload are not penalised: “They get the easier tasks to do because they won’t be able to manage the other, but the person that can do it gets that put on them as well usually, and you see it all around in college. And I know a lot of people who work in schools and it’s the same for them. If they’re doing a good job they’ll get more and more piled on them. It’s like it’s part of culture in education, really.” Georgina had negotiated a small amount of extra time for teaching HE programmes: “I did approach her [curriculum manager] and I asked if I could have either more money or remission and she said, ‘Well I’ll give you an-hour-a-week’s remission’ [ ] and I have approached her again in the past about the scholarly activity and all those sort of things and it’s, ‘No, we’ve got to -you’ve got to be on par with everyone else [meaning with FE]’.”

There was a resigned compliance with Georgina and Tina and we see that the individual recognises certain authority sources and consequently cultivates beliefs and behaviours as a teacher, and this element of their identity is subjectified reinforcing the reality (Clarke, 2009, p191). This also fits with Deci and Ryan's (1985) views on the compliance needed in controlling environments.

Tracey felt little was done to support boundaries around personal time and workload. This suggests that the lack of some rules around workload restricts their freedom –the freedom to say no to responding to emails at all hours. As referred to in Chapter Six, she consequently felt compelled to respond to emails on her day off, weekends and holidays: "Everybody works differently, because I see colleagues who can completely leave the doors on the Friday at whatever time it is and they can switch off. And other people can't. And I don't know if that's a personality thing. I don't know if it's, you know. I don't know why some people take the accountability on more than others, you know. I'm not sure. But sometimes, I think if some kind of guidelines were issued by the college, it might help, you know." We can see links to the structural-agentive processes and the limits of individual agency emerging in terms of these relationships and contractual working conditions.

Tracey wanted to have managerial approval that it was acceptable to draw some boundaries and referred often to the demands of her own mind: "I think the expectations in part, you know, they come from yourself." This showed that Tracey could see how the control of her behaviour lay not just with the management of the setting but with the 'relationship with oneself' and she was demonstrating a power struggle that ethically she could not overcome even though it appeared to her that others could (Clarke, 2009, p190).

Eddie explained the pressure he felt due to workload, the impact on his home life and his difficult relationship with management. Eddie did challenge his workload and let some elements of his role slip. Eddie felt that some things had to go undone due to the extreme pressures of the job and his commitment to his family. This gave him concerns that he may be viewed as non-compliant when he did not complete all of his administrative tasks: "So things don't get done because of the pressures on the time. They see me as being kind of obstructive, or non-compliant, or just being difficult, when in effect I'm not. You know, I've got young family ...all the time I've full-time teaching with marking, HE as well. They have this opinion, and I often have to go and justify my perceived lack of compliance for any given task, when in reality if there was an awareness of the pressures on sort of the time, then they will understand a little bit more, but it seems as though they don't. So, I think with the management, some of them I would have a positive relationship, but lots of them, I don't (Laughs)".

Eddie was moved from a management position back into a full-time teaching role. "There was a new principal, who came in. [ ] We didn't see eye-to-eye. And she would, by hook or by crook, [see] that I lost my position as what I was doing. And then they -they put me back into a full-time teaching role. So in terms of my you know, the institutional politics here, I never did fit because I had an opinion." Eddie showed that changing the discourse and the struggles involved should not be underestimated in terms of potential cost to the individual. He expressed feelings of hurt about this: "I have a smile, I try and teach with a sense of humour, but there is certainly still a bad feeling with me and the way I was treated. I wasn't treated as everybody else and that's what hurts me the most, because I do have an opinion,

because I'm quite outspoken, and I do speak up when I don't agree with something, I'm seen as a troublemaker, but I'm not. But you know, there is that -or level of hurt more than anything. But it didn't affect my job; it didn't affect these guys [the students]. They're the most important thing to me, you know." Eddie was signed off by his doctor during this period: "it ended up breaking me for some time, you know?" Eddie felt that when the previous Principal left she showed signs of guilt at how he was treated: "On her last day she called me into her office and she hadn't spoke to me for, -the whole process basically was left to her people to do. And then she calls me off to her office and told me that she was sorry, in a roundabout kind of way -how I've been treated over the last 6-12 months."

Eddie felt that the current management were more supportive and showed recognition of what he went through. He suggests that they were aware of his struggle: "I think they have an understanding of how badly I was treated by certain other individuals, and I think there is an understanding there that you know, not to make life easier for me, but just understand that there has been a tough time and they understand where I'm coming from, you know. And that's just me trying to influence them to make my life easier, that's just a professional and personal relationship I've got with both of them. It means I can say 'listen I can't do that for next week because it just isn't time. I'm going to McDonald's with my kids today you know, and then I'm teaching for the rest of the week'. So, you know, there is a positive relationship I think with both of them, and that helps me, and them I think." Eddie shows an ability to resist the struggles and his ethico-political posturing allowed him to change elements of the discourse even though the relationship of power meant that they were able to remove his post. Eddie appears to have strong levels of reflexivity to create discourses

around his identity that suggest a shift, albeit slight as he manipulates the situation to take better care of himself as Infinito argued is necessary (2003a).

### **Relationships with line managers: control, compliance and positioning**

There was a variety of experience in how participants developed and lived out relationships with their line managers. For some, there was a feeling that they had to justify their time, be on site rather than work from home, and deal with managers who had a micro-managing approach to monitoring and controlling their staff. However, some participants had positive experiences and developed trust with their managers. Some cultivated behaviours for dealing with aspects that they did not like such as the micro-management of their whereabouts or being asked to do aspects of their role that they did not like.

Shelley was very positive in her view of how she was managed: “I think I’ve developed really good relationships with the managers. And I do feel like I’m given autonomy and I do feel like they are interested and I am respected to do the job that I do, and I think of that respect because the job that I do, I know I do really, really well.” Shelley liked to be managed and pass on problems or difficult decisions: “I know I’m respected, but I like the fact that I’ve got someone to go and ask, and when there’s tricky decisions to make, and maybe stressful situations or events have happened, I’m very happy to be in a position where I can pass that on, and I don’t have to deal with that. So I like to be in that middle position where I’ve got autonomy to be able to do with my courses what I want to, on assessments, to deal with my students the way I want, but I don’t have to take on some of the tricky decisions or procedures, that I’ve got someone to pass it on to.” Shelley finds freedom in being

managed fitting with the view that control and power creates freedom to act ethically (Infinito, 2003a).

Shelley showed elements of being highly compliant as her views suggested that even if she were forced into an unwanted situation by management, such as teaching HE again, she would accept it, which fits with the compliance of staff in FE found by others (Shain and Gleeson, 1999). Shelley: "I want to be teaching in FE and I wouldn't aspire to teach HE in the college or at the university anymore. Saying that, if they timetable me next year, in September to do a HE module, I would also do it but that's part of being within the team and not letting all the staff members down." Shelley felt that not all of her colleagues felt like she did in terms of her relationships with management: "I don't think everybody feels like that. I think some people feel like they should have more responsibility and be able to make more decisions and have more autonomy. I think I would say I'm probably, in the minority rather than majority."

Shelley felt that while she did enjoy her job and good relations with the management that the workload was unreasonable: "I'm not happy with the amount of work and the level [Shelley confirmed she meant volume] of work, which has progressively become more."

This ability for Shelley to see many positives in management, the supporting role that they could offer and the separation of workload issues made her one of the more content participants. The relationship with managers offered Shelley an endpoint in this element of her identity and this appears to cultivate her positioning herself as compliant even though not entirely content.

Rick was at ease with his line manager and used language suggesting that he could control elements of his management. He did this by saying “‘I have a pile of marking, I have nothing on for Friday morning; I’m not observing, I’m staying at home.’ And that’s usually -you know, that’s okay”. This suggests that Rick took a controlling role in the relationship as he tells his manager that he is staying at home creating the reality through his language which fits with a social constructionist reading of the text.

Rick felt the freedom in his role was due to the management having little knowledge of how his programmes ran and the volume of work involved. “I think a part of it is, academically, they see an actual research module at master’s level and think, ‘Well, I don’t understand any of that. So just -you know what you’re doing.’ So, stop trying to micro-manage me and just let me get on with it. [ ] I think further that there is a mystique around some of HE. I teach the highest level programmes in the whole of the college. So the master’s modules are as high as it ever gets here, I think I’m right in saying. I’m the only person who’s taught them here. So they -that in itself sort of keeps people off. [ ] I’m not micro-managed, but I mean that is an accident as much as anything; FE has a propensity to micro-manage. I mean I rave against FE management approaches constantly. So there is an instinct to do that, and I have had managers who have tried to do that. And the way I’ve dodged it is that, well, I’ve swamped them. So, okay, you want to micro-manage me? All right, I will show you everything I do and see how you cope with it. I’m going to ask you for everything. And they soon see that they just -that they don’t understand it because there’s just so much of it.”

This is another example of the positioning and cultivation of behaviours around the relationships with authority and the subversive use of power in a ‘struggle’ of the role. Rick

and Eddie appear to have similar views, but Rick has found ways of positioning himself more successfully and has survived without the work-related sick leave that Eddie experienced.

Walter also experienced a position where he gained power in relation to the lack of HE experience within the management: “I have autonomy by default in the sense that, as we've seen before, a lot of managers don't know about the HE; because they don't know about it - this can be a huge disadvantage when it comes to getting resources- but when it comes to them involving themselves in what you do, there's a plus side, and the plus side is that they don't know and can't imagine and that then means that your role becomes more autonomous”. Walter, like Rick, had found a fulfilment in the relationship with management due to their lack of knowledge and understanding of his role.

Tracey liked her line manager, but she rarely saw her because she managed so many other lecturers: “But you don't feel like you're being line managed to some extent. I could probably count on one hand the number of times I've seen her this year. So, she does, she does grant you that autonomy. And I think she kind of -she's got confidence in the programme and I think she's got confidence in how it's run. At the same time, I will approach her when I've got a problem like with the safeguarding issue on Friday morning.” “I think a lot of managers will leave you alone if they're happy with your statistics” Tracey. The notion of ‘statistics’ was so commonplace that Tracey did not feel compelled to explain what she meant. The neo-liberal language and performativity methods of FE (Gleeson et al. 2015) appear embedded and here they are taken for granted within HE in FE.



Similarly, Bernie rarely saw her line manager and viewed this as a positive: “Interestingly, I feel quite removed. They’re not as much a presence as they were in primary school teaching. So for example I think the first time when I went for my first appraisal, I think I only met her once. So in actual fact, there’s not a lot of contact. Contact comes to other things, processes, things that need doing. So in that respect it’s very, very different because the management seem quite removed.” Val also described management, who were based on the separate FE campus, as distant, but she felt that this made them out of touch: “And you think you know you haven’t been here for six weeks, you’ve just popped in and you know chucked a fox in with all the chickens you know.” She felt that the management “condensed” their visits: “It’s like I’m going to come down and tell you about that, that, that, that, that, that in one go.”

Not all of the participants were content. June pointed to inconsistencies in her setting with regard to the attitude of her line manager: “I think it depends very much on the personality at that time. Sometimes I actually feel really quite supported and a very decent recognition. I can say I really do need to mark at home today; I can’t do that here. I mean, that’s really quite respected. A week later, that’s not respected. So I think possibly what the problem is because there’s not a general recognition of issues; the approach is not consistent”. June felt this was down to personal relationships with the line manager: “Regrettably, within any department, and I am sure this is the same for FE and HE, there’s different respect for different individuals.”

June found that the management created a way of monitoring and controlling staff that favoured the setting. This made it impossible to find time to recoup the hours teaching

evening classes. “The biggest single problem is ‘toil’, time off in lieu, and a complete lack of understanding that basically, from a student starting in September until the student is finishing, I do actually lecture three nights a week and it is not possible to take the ‘toil’ on a Friday, because I need that time to basically do the job, but we have a college policy of not allowing to accrue more than two days toil in any term.” This meant that if June did not take the time back for the three evenings that she worked, she could not save it up for the end of term and essentially lost the time.

June had recently experienced a change in line management resulting in an easier situation:

“At this moment in time, actually, I’m in quite a good place in relation to management and I’ve actually found them certainly in the last four or five months to be very supportive, but that wasn’t the case previously. And I did actually have to reason with them the fact that it really wasn’t possible to continue with this workload without some flexibility.” June uses the term ‘in a good place in relation to management’ adding to the argument that individuals are in a constant state of ‘positioning’ and struggle, and that they are aware of this.

Jim also felt marginalised: “I think here, there is a definite power balance, and it’s not necessarily predisposed towards supporting people. I think there’s an element of patronage going on in this organisation. [ ] So, I personally don’t feel that my skills are being maximised in the organisation. And I think I’d even go so far as being marginalised is a better description.” Jim felt that there was a suspicion from line managers around where they were if staff were not at their desk or in the classroom: “And I think some of the freedom we have to have in delivering teacher education is seen with some elements of

suspicion that we're not actually doing our role. We're not in the office; therefore, we're not working kind of thing".

June had a similar experience: "So whereas if I haven't walked through this door and to my office, where I'm sitting right now, on time, there's a little bit of a 'where's June'?" June explained that they had a system for monitoring the whereabouts of staff: "There is a board on the wall in the office and if you do disappear during the day and they don't know where you are, comments will...are made". The relationships with authority for these participants was negative and we can see the positioning of June when she refers to her line manager in a very detached way as 'they' -the management- monitor the movements of staff. June alters her language from the passive 'will be made' to 'are made' strengthening her position of struggle with authority.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter it emerged that participants commonly held the view that their College management was generally FE focused and that this had an impact on their roles. There was a shared view that HEIs and HE in FE had varying norms and cultures. Participants felt that the underlying purpose of the FE College was as a training setting for vocational programmes. Managerial value was placed on vocational skills and achievements of the tutor, and the number of contact or teaching hours as currency over and above academic achievement. By comparison the participants felt that in a university setting, the values of management were focused upon the academic achievement of research and publication,

with teaching skills and students as a secondary interest which is in line with other research (Barnett, 2005; Hussey and Smith, 2010; Creasy, 2013).

For some, there was a positive impact, because there was an air of mystique or separateness in terms of HE work and this allowed greater levels of freedom and autonomy in the classroom, as we saw earlier in Chapter Five. There was also frustration and marginalisation and it led to feelings of stress and resentment. This was largely through the perceived ignorance of workload and requirements of the HE role resulting in a lack of resources, such as books and journals and unrealistic expectations resulting in a lack of time allowed for preparation and marking, and a lack of appreciation for academic achievement and the scholarly nature of teaching preparation which Feather also found (2014).

There was a strong sense of compliance from most of the participants despite feelings of guilt and resentment around the amount of time the job took from family. Where non-compliance was evident relationships with managers broke down, and there were feelings of hurt. There was evidence that some participants felt that they had very good relationships with management, but even so, they reported that the workload was high. Some participants felt that they had positive relationships with their line managers and felt able to discuss problems. Others found that they rarely had contact with their line manager and had a sense of detachment. Several participants felt that the management favoured certain individuals and that inconsistency was an issue. Most participants recognised the drivers of finance and legislation on managerial decisions and they commonly mentioned the pressure of fee-paying students and success statistics in relation to compliance and performance.

The use of IPA has allowed these idiographic experiences to emerge and reveals themes around the manipulation of managers in order to maintain the freedom that was gained from their lack of understanding of HE. Relationships with authority sources were varied according to personal ambition, relationships and personalities. There appears to be a detachment for some and yet more personal relationships with line managers for others. However, there was an awareness of struggle, even where people were content and an eye to maintaining as much freedom as possible in all but one scenario. The next chapter brings together the discussion of these four analysis chapters in relation to the key research questions.

## **Chapter Eight: Discussion**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter I will discuss the analysis and present my theory on the identity of the HE in FE lecturer with the aim to explore the identity of the HE in FE lecturer by considering the research questions:

- 1, How is being a HE in FE lecturer located within an individual's background?
- 2, How does the individual experience the role in terms of self-practice and authority?
- 3, Does the identity of the HE in FE lecturer have apparent pedagogical implications?

### **How being a HE in FE lecturer is located within an individual's background context and aspirations**

The first research question asks how being a HE in FE lecturer is located within an individual's past, their parents' employment, their own career history and aspirations and their own experiences of education. Through the questionnaires and interviews an overview of parental and personal information was gathered. The analysis showed that participants had elements of experience in common with each other, in particular, in relation to their parents' lack of HE. The analysis showed that most of the participants had similar profiles to the widening participation students now entering HE in FE (Parry et al. 2012, Chowdry et al. 2013). This is a significant aspect of the HE in FE lecturer's identity and a key emergent theme.

The majority of the participants had childhoods in families that they described or implied were working class or lower middle class. Their parents generally had unskilled or semi-skilled jobs not requiring HE qualifications, and some had military or policing careers; June's mother, a teacher, was the only parent in the entire sample with apparent experience of HE.

Parental background is a significant factor in whether a child is likely to go into HE with large statistical studies showing that differences in parental education has an impact on children at a very early age. This follows throughout school and with the take up of HE (Chowdry et al. 2013). Given parental education, experience and profession, most of these individuals display levels of agency which has taken them out of the statistically most likely route for their background which suggests that they had high agentic ability (Giddens, 1991). If they were students today, we would probably class most of them as belonging to widening participation groups.

The analysis showed that most of the participants had experienced FE themselves which is usually needed in order to teach on the vocational courses in an FE college (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005; Spenceley, 2011). The range of reasons for entering FE and the levels of fulfilment gained in that environment were clearly articulated as significant with several disliking school and leaving at their first opportunity. Parental and teacher influence also encouraged participants to take less academic, vocational routes.

The participants commonly articulated how they felt much happier in FE than in school, and found success in the college environment. They reflected on the fulfilment of enjoying education after disliking school, and this emerges as a theme, linked to their motivation to

support their students, confirming other findings (Burkhill et al. 2008; Kadi-Hanifi and Elliott, 2016). For most participants the success in FE led them into HE, and the fulfilment of this journey was seen by them as a reason for wanting to teach in an FE setting. They appear to have high intrinsic motivation leading to self-determination in this area (Deci and Ryan, 2002). The endpoint or fulfilment, in returning to the environment in which they flourished, nurtured within them the motivation to support others on a similar journey showing links to their own education, as Burkhill et al. found (2008). They recognised the role FE played in their development and positivity about education. This created notions of empathy, expectation and fulfilment. Participants' experience of being in an FE setting for their own education supports findings of other researchers, that the background is a hidden, but significant, factor that influences teaching and learning (Ashwin 2009; Kadi-Hanifi and Keenan, 2016).

Meeting student needs appears at the heart of the lecturer's interest, alongside the desire for these students to succeed through these routes *as they once did*. The participants are fulfilled by supporting the students, not in maintaining non-HE backgrounds, but by supporting them to gain access to HE and enable student agency. They bend to meet the needs of this group, and to support their change through education, again, *as they once changed*. The participants are supporting the reflexive capabilities of identity formation that Goffman (1956) and Giddens (1991) recognised, and the complex processes of ethico-political identity formation, with power 'struggles' between themselves and family, management and the students, in line with Foucauldian theorising (Infinito, 2003a; Clarke, 2009).



The way in which people present themselves to the outside world in everyday life varies according to audience, and these negotiated projections of the self, carry significance (Goffman, 1956). This group of participants revealed nuanced views in relation to personal projections and descriptions, and their ethical behaviours, regarding their background and role. Some felt proud of their professional role, with Rebecca suggesting very high self-esteem and a keenness to present her achievements in the best possible light. In contrast, Walter felt that people from outside of the college looked down on aspects of his role as he associated it with technical skills teaching. These polarised views were from polarised backgrounds with Walter having a more traditional university experience to Rebecca's. Participants articulated how they recognised differences in the way certain audiences interpreted their identity on a familial level, within the community, and in relation to colleagues and other institutions. These experiences were personal, with inconsistencies between the participants, which supports the value of the IPA methodology, where the approach is to look for idiographic detail (Smith et al. 2009).

Within these personal standpoints there existed further positioning, as individuals showed how they manipulated their description of themselves and their role to present either something that impressed or paradoxically something that played down their role, depending on the audience, as Goffman identified in relation to stigma (1963). There was clear recognition for Tracey and Val, for instance, that professional life and family background were disparate and Tracey, in particular, felt that she had a role that was out of her parents' comfort zones. She felt that there was stigma in terms of too high an achievement for familial acceptance. Thus, we have perhaps the reverse of what might be

assumed, with the family being given a different, played-down version of the reality of Tracey's identity.

The participants, whilst happy teaching HE in FE, suggested that they had a lack of confidence when they considered whether they would want to lecture in universities, and presented a range of barriers including qualifications, lack of research, teaching methods and the need for publications. This may be the inability for individuals to resist structural boundaries or to free their thoughts, preventing them from being able to think differently as 'freedom can be daunting as it means letting go of the safe anchor' (Clarke, 2009, p194). It appears that the very FE-ness of the HE in FE environment that gives them the confidence to carry out the self-practices of the HE in FE role. The HE-ness of the HEI environment appears to reduce confidence. So the HE in FE lecturers cling to the safe anchor of the FEC; this maintains the boundaries of the fields in which they are comfortable.

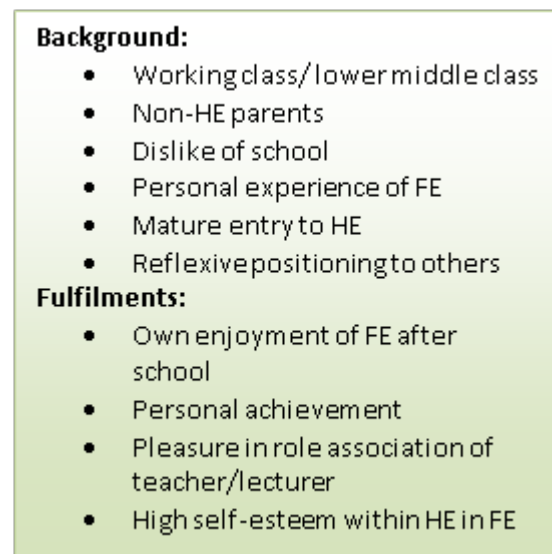
The CBHE environment offers opportunities to become a HE lecturer in a marginalised environment. Clegg (2008) and Barnett and Di Napoli (2008) highlighted how these new HE spaces create room for the less traditional academic. The micro-level change from FE to HE in FE appears to be an attainable leap for these participants. Whereas HE in a HEI is seemingly a greater change, that was out of reach and at the limit of agentic ability. Developing the required research skills and becoming research active, would be the significant step needed for a move into a more traditional HEI setting (Wilson and Wilson, 2011). This would require valuing research over teaching when workload is high, and anything which challenged the quality of their teaching appeared to sit uneasily with most

of these participants. Whilst the policy changes in the 1990s (such as Dearing, 1997) needed the FE lecturer to teach HE in FE, it did not need them to teach HE in HEIs.

There is no assumption here that individuals teaching HE in FE do not move into HEIs, indeed personal experience confirms that this happens. The data suggest, however, that it is likely that for some, fulfilment is higher within HE in FE and therefore they are intrinsically motivated to stay in this particular environment (Deci and Ryan, 2002). Thus, creating a discourse where those individuals stay in the HE in FE environment, because this is where they feel comfortable, successful and self-determined. As Watson asserts those working in HE discover who they are and once they find this niche they are likely to stay there (2008).

The use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis for the methodology of this study has created a focus on the idiographic and contextual aspects –the ‘person in context’ (Larkin et al. 2006, p108). This reveals the positionality of the participants in relation to their experiences, allowing us to ‘glimpse a person’s current subjective mode-of-engagement with some specific context’ (Smith et al, 2009, p195). This supports the social constructionist view that multiple and sometimes paradoxical discourses are created through cognitive activity, developing identity and indeed context. The reconstructive function of the narratives of the participants allows them to re-interpret their experiences so that ‘their lives become more liveable’ and they create a narrative around their life that is positive (Smith et al, p197). Paradoxically, the creation of such discourses defines their identity with limitations; the exploration of the self-practices and relations with authority sources allows an in-depth view. The IPA methodology created a rich set of data giving deep insight into the way in which participants were complicit in the defining process of their role

identity and the process of positioning the self. The themes emerging around background are shown in Figure 11, below.



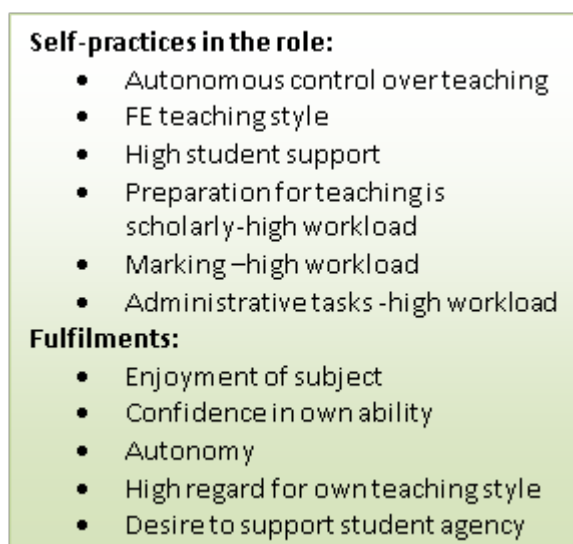
**Figure 11. Themes emerging from the analysis of background**

### **Self-practices and Relationships with Authority Sources**

The second key question asks how does the individual experience the HE in FE role in terms of self-practice and authority. The self-practices of the role are a significant element of the identity of the individual. The approach to how these are experienced is a fundamental part of understanding the relationship with oneself, as daily struggles emerge in relation to living out the role (Clarke, 2009). To this extent, whilst self-practices and relations with authority sources were dealt with separately in the analysis, they are entwined. The requirements of the role are linked to the demands of authority. By treating these as separate elements in the analysis it allowed for individual detail and the fulfilment of the self-practices to be explored.

What emerged was a relatively positive view of their role as the participants often focused on motivational aspects and areas of fulfilment rather than on the more negative aspects. Whilst looking for individual experience, there were some shared views, and the majority of participants emphasised just how much they loved their job. This study has a similar outcome to Clegg's research (2008, p342) where she revealed positive attitudes despite the common grumblings generally heard as 'day-to-day talk'. Clegg claimed that this was because people were enthusiastic to talk about themselves as 'projects' and despite the managerial constraints they held positive views. The positive attitudes towards participants' self-practices leads this study to reject a deficit model focussing on the negatives, such as cynicism around scholarly activity and despair at the workload, which others have found (Feather, 2012).

The participants' experiences showed that they covered similar duties to those in other institutions with teaching and the associated administration, preparation, marking and student support, confirming the findings of Young (2002), Burkhill et al. (2008) and Turner et al. (2009). There were many similarities in experience and consistencies that suggest there were shared and fundamental aspects to the role across a range of settings. The findings were also in line with accepted differences between HE in FE in terms of contact hours for teaching, pay and time for research and scholarly activity, which are different to HE in HEI conditions (Simmons and Lea, 2013). So although this is a small sample with limitations to wider claims and generalisations, it is in line with other findings in these areas. The key themes emerging are shown in Figure 12, below, and the next section offers discussion of these.



**Figure 12. Themes emerging around self-practices in the role**

### **Teaching, preparing and marking**

Three of the main elements of self-practice were teaching, preparation for teaching and marking. The preparation for teaching and the actual teaching were practices that provided enjoyment for most, especially in terms of teaching HE in FE, confirming previous studies (Young, 2002; Turner et al., 2009; Wilson and Wilson, 2011). This was despite some negativity around the demands of the role and high levels of effort, time and skill to meet the standard required at the HE level. The participants felt that their HE work was less prescribed and less skill-focused than FE. One participant found this difficult, whilst the others enjoyed it, due to their interest in the subject and the high autonomy in the classroom, describing it as 'liberating' (Bernie). The choice of the term 'liberating' has significance in a study that has used a constructionist-influenced analysis, as 'liberty' is a bi-product of a relationship with authority, a freedom to act ethically (Infinite, 2003a). For

Deci and Ryan, this freedom is the ability to make genuine choices, giving autonomy, which increases self-determination or intrinsic motivation (1985).

Unlike teaching, marking was seen as a time consuming necessity that impinged on home life. It was generally done in one's 'own time', that is, on top of the hours of their contract. The common view was that the task of marking HE was harder than marking within the FE programmes, and that this was not appreciated by managers. For example, the skills based NVQ approach required 'tick-list' marking which was done in sessions to tick-off competencies. The participants needed a high level of knowledge and ability to mark the HE assignments, and they felt that this was not accounted for in time allocated to marking. Turnaround times were tight with participants claiming that the only way they could meet, for instance, a three-week turnaround, was by marking during holidays, weekends or through the night. There was a strong feeling that it needed doing well, because the students deserved high quality feedback and were paying high fees for the service, confirming the view of the HE student as customer (Morley, 2003).

Marking was a vehicle by which aspects of fulfilment were lost and autonomy challenged. The time taken for marking and the freedoms around marking at home or not, and in one's own time, were also significant in discussions around relations with managers and aspects of autonomy. Marking appeared to take away freedom and demand compliance so it was one of the areas where participants found it difficult to 'care for the self' (Infinito, 2003a). There appeared little fulfilment in the self-practice of marking, beyond it being a necessary part of the job that required compliance. This could be the controlling environment of FE, leading to lowered intrinsic motivation as theorists suggest is likely: 'The sense of the

controlling environment is that they deliver outcomes when the person complies' (Deci and Ryan, 1985, p162).

The time given to marking and the high contact hours for the self-practices of teaching and marking are considered by others as the reason for the lack of time given to scholarly and research activity for HE in FE lecturers (Young, 2002; Feather, 2010; Wilson and Wilson, 2011; Creasy, 2013). This supports the creation of the discourse around the HE in FE lecturer's identity as not research active. Despite this, these participants spent large amounts of time reading in order to prepare for teaching and this is considered below.

### **Scholarly and Research Activity**

There were mixed feelings around gaining further qualifications or being research active as a self-practice. When considering their options, there was a lack of reward in being scholarly and it appeared that there was little self-determination in this area. There was a common recognition that HE was different to FE where vocational skills were rated as more important, confirming the general view in the literature (Simmons and Leas, 2013). The dominant FE culture led participants to feeling that gaining further qualifications would not enhance their position within the college, would not be rewarded financially and would not be valued along the same lines as increased vocational skills. There was also a view that the demands of the job left no time for further qualifications or research activity, confirming the findings of Feather (2012) and Creasy (2013).

Eddie, who had published a conference paper, spoke passionately about his desire to study for a doctorate, but felt the commitment to his family was already strained through the



demands of the role. June and Val presented a similar view on wanting to complete an MA. These individuals had to consider competing demands from caring for their own desire to study and their desire to spend time with their families, one of their ethico-political struggles (Clarke, 2009). For some there was evidence of intrinsic motivation and desire to study for a higher degree and to be research active; Tracey was completing a PhD and Bernie was studying for an MA.

This was recognised by some as a distinction between the experiences of those teaching HE in FE and those teaching HE in HEIs. It was a difference for their students in terms of the learning environment, confirming the findings of others (for example Young, 2002; Golding-Lloyd and Griffiths, 2008; Wilson and Wilson, 2011; Creasy, 2013). The lack of the desired self-practice in this area appeared to reinforce the lack of confidence around teaching HE in HEIs, with several participants outlining the lack of MA or doctorate as a reason for not being able to teach HE in non-college based settings. This is a further area of struggle and ethico-political posturing in the development of their identity and the creation of the discourse around HE in FE.

This lack of time and reward for scholarly activity for the HE in FE lecturer is, for some, unacceptable as it is central in creating a different form of HE for the students (Young, 2002; Golding Lloyd and Griffiths, 2008; Feather, 2010; 2012; Wilson and Wilson, 2011; Creasy, 2013). This study finds that in understanding the emergent identity of the HE in FE lecturer that, generally, the lack of being research active is one of the features of their identity. This partly relates to the pervading FE culture and the heavy workload already permeating their home life. A discourse around the lack of research in favour of more time spent on teaching

and administrative tasks emerges as a theme and part of the identity of the HE in FE lecturer. However, there was a significant amount of time spent researching for teaching as others have found, and this is scholarly and should not be overlooked (Feather, 2014).

### **Supporting Students**

The self-practice of supporting students emerged as a significant aspect of the role and identity of the HE in FE lecturer, confirming the findings of previous studies (Young, 2002; Wilson and Wilson, 2011). It carried high levels of fulfilment for the participants, but also caused high workload and stress. All of the participants felt that they had to offer a high volume of support, similar to that offered in FE, and often provided in times outside of lectures. This caring aspect of the role confirms the findings of others (Simmons and Lea, 2013) who highlighted that this level of support was one of the reasons for the students choosing a college based course. This does not fit with the findings of McTaggart (2016) who found students felt unsupported.

Amongst the participants, there was a shared experience of needing to be available for students for the full working week and most participants felt that it was not possible to work from home or to be off the premises. The participants appeared compliant in requirements to remain available to students even when they were busy marking. They also referred to the students coming from FE routes, having expectations of high levels of support and access to staff as others have found (Meredith, 2013).

The participants commonly felt that the enormous workload impinged on their personal life. This included feeling unable to give time to their children, partners and friends with feelings

of guilt, resentment and frustration and yet there was no suggestion from them that student support should be lessened. They felt that they were part of the process that created demanding students, even though they arrived with higher needs due to their WP backgrounds. Future studies of student identity in HE in FE could usefully explore some of these findings from a student's perspective, which is also important and to some extent contradictory (McTaggart, 2016; Stoten, 2016).

The notion of creating a different type of student, to that in the traditional HEI, is significant. The evidence here supports the notion that this is a different offer and that a set of behaviours is developed that may prevent the student being as autonomous as HE students in traditional HEIs. For the participants, there were no suggestions from themselves that they might approach the role differently and, ironically, there were high levels of fulfilment enjoyed in supporting students and offering a high quality experience. This appears to fit with self-construction and normalization theories where the discourse is created through individuals drawing upon their established schemes of experience and this shapes their behaviour (Clarke, 2009).

The high workload and lack of time, because of the support given to students, meant that the participant has to balance the needs of the student with their own needs. From the outside, it appears that pedagogical practices 'need to be renegotiated within specific contexts' (Clarke, 2009, p 194). The pervading FE culture of performativity meant that participants confessed to fears of having to fail students, confirming the findings of Bathmaker and Avis's work on FE (2005). They were also conscious that the students were paying high fees and that if they did not support students they would complain or react

negatively and their programme statistics would be poor. Consequently, these pressures prevented them looking at options where they restricted support; they appeared to have fatalistic acceptance that offering high levels of support was the only option. Clarke argues that teachers need to recognise and challenge perspectives in order to ease the responsibility and recognise potential new actions rather than closing off 'avenues for exercising ethical agency' (2009, p195). Even in the case of Eddie, who outlined the need for boundaries and time for his family, there was no cutting back on the time given to contact and support for students whom he placed at the centre of his commitments. The students appear to hold power and to demand attention, partly because of the way in which their tutors respond to the demand. It is possible that the participants expect the demands from the outset, reinforcing the discourse and creating or recreating the reality. Georgina suggested she was 'creating monsters', a clear confirmation that she saw her part as co-creator of the situation.

Despite these struggles and cynicism around time, workload, marking and supporting students, the participants maintained that they loved what they were doing. It was a common response for participants to emphasise how much they loved it. This confirms Young's findings that her participants 'were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the benefits they derive from teaching on the degree course' (2002, p279). This does not fit with the negative views that Feather found in his study, which appeared to focus more on dissatisfaction and feelings of working in a blame culture (2010; 2011; 2016).

## **Ethico-political considerations**

The ethico-political work of other teacher identity studies, who have used Foucault's theorising, such as Clarke (2009) and Infinito (2003a; 2003b), is helpful in supporting the analysis of the data. These lecturers appear locked into aspects of their practice, particularly in offering high levels of support to their students even though this creates an unyielding workload and dependent students. The participants have developed their ideas in their own education, in association with their peers, and through their FE experience. They are attached to their own ways of thinking that have become established and they have different levels of being able to question this; for instance, Tracey challenges some of her thinking and questions why she holds onto some of her beliefs whereas most of the others reaffirm their commitment to high levels of support.

Clarke (2009) considered student teachers and Infinito (2003b) considered aspects of teaching racial awareness, and they observed similar conflict in the ability to question and change ways of thinking. They argued that the teacher's practical knowledge is not free, but encumbered by their own past experiences and that of others around them. Consequently, behaviours which the participants hold dear, such as offering high levels of support, are not easily challenged. It appears to be embedded in their way of thinking and are part of their identity. The purpose of this study is not to challenge the behaviours or the identity of the HE in FE lecturer, but it does aim to link to wider debates on WP and social mobility. As Clarke and Infinito argue, in order to develop fully, and to access their freedoms and liberties, individuals need to be able to recognise how they come to think the way they do

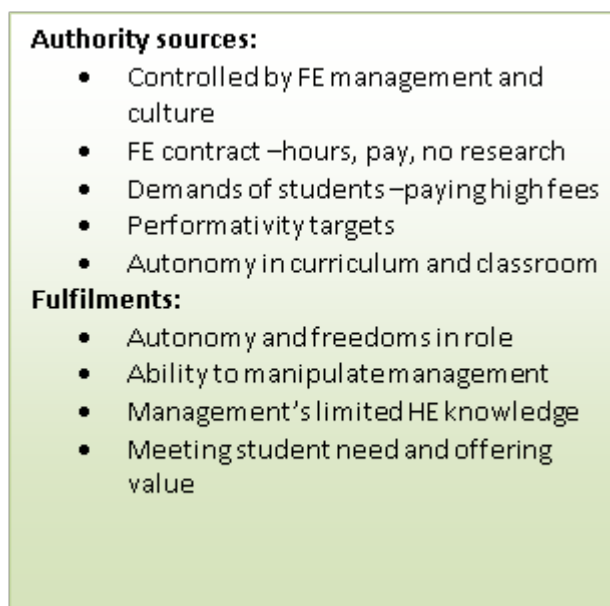
and to challenge this. This is an essential process in reaching their agentic potential, and importantly will impact on the student experience.

These ethico-political struggles that the participants experience are significant in relation to the identity formation of the HE in FE students, because that is tied to the identity of their lecturers and the FE environment. The pedagogical practices, such as high levels of support, which the participants create and reinforce, may not even be in the students' best interests. As the participants observed, this behaviour in themselves reinforces dependency within the students. This may be having detrimental effects on a student's future; they could struggle with progression to the university setting as Greenbank (2007) found in his study. The autonomy that the lecturer's find in their pedagogical practice, limits their requirement to engage in the ethico-political questioning. So this limits the extent of change on their behaviour, and this could be limiting the autonomous learning of the students. This links to the debates on WP and the policy context around these alternative offers of HE in non-traditional settings. As Avis and Orr (2016) found, large statistical studies suggest that society is not fully addressing social mobility by widening participation through HE in FE.

### **Relationships with authority sources**

It was commonly recognised that there were high level influences that placed senior management in the college in positions of high responsibility and accountability. The participants also recognised that external bodies such as Ofsted had a major influence and created environments based on the statistical outcomes of programmes, which we would expect to find in FE (Gleeson et al. 2015). The impact of these influences was seen as

problematic and influenced their practices. Reference to FE culture and the domination of FE within the settings was common even in the colleges that had their own HE centres. This was driven by the adherence to FE culture, including contracts where high teaching or contact hours, less pay than universities, lack of appreciation for academic qualifications, and a culture of not failing students prevailed. The main themes emerging around authority sources and management are illustrated in Figure 13, below.



**Figure 13. The themes emerging around authority sources**

Across the five colleges in this study, the participants felt that FE management dominated the HE in the college. There were generally positive relationships with managers at varying levels including where participants felt dissatisfaction with the system. The participants’ reflections showed that they recognised the pressure of external forces and funding in particular, and that the managers were in a position where they had to meet government targets and budget restrictions. Nevertheless, it was felt by some that there were

inconsistencies and elements of inequity in the way they were treated compared to colleagues and this was an area of discontent. There were varying extremes of this view such as June's feeling that things varied according to management personalities, with consequential positive and negative experiences over time. Some participants felt that these issues were personal and where this was challenged the consequences were not always positive, with Eddie for instance being bullied when he made a stand around the demands of his role. These were the ethico-political struggles that the Foucauldian-based theorists expect to find (Infinito, 2003a; Clarke, 2009). The varying views of the individuals show that relationships with management were complex and operated at personal and higher levels, and some relationships did offer aspects of fulfilment. The IPA methodology allowed for these idiographic differences to emerge.

Tracey demonstrated the middle ground, feeling that managers were in extremely difficult roles themselves. However, she was still critical that the demands of her HE role were not appreciated or addressed. Rebecca, who aspired to management, felt that managers were aware of the demands of the role and did offer concessions and she found that relationships with management were an area of fulfilment. Shelley also felt that management were sympathetic and supportive; she suggested high levels of personal compliance and satisfaction, and she gratefully passed issues to them when she had a problem. To this extent, management was liberating for Shelley and one of the reasons for her creating a positive discourse around her FE role and stepping away from her HE role. She wanted to be told what to do and was happy with high levels of external control which she felt relieved her of some accountability. The other participants, preferred the high level of autonomy



experienced in the HE work. This suggests that there are personal differences in preference for the more autonomous, informational environment of HE whereas some prefer the controlling environment of FE (Deci and Ryan, 1985).

Several of the participants found that the lack of HE experience of managers within the FE culture, was part of the reason for their freedom. There were examples where participants found ways to perpetuate this by manipulating managers, bombarding them with information and maintaining some degree of mystery around what their role entailed. Consequently, participants were often left to teach and run their programmes without interference.

The fulfilling aspect of the autonomy was particularly felt in the classroom when teaching HE programmes. There was a common feeling that they had much more freedom to teach what they wanted than they had when teaching in FE. As managers and colleagues did not know about or understand the HE elements of the college, participants were liberated from elements of micro-management and the FE curriculum. This freedom and autonomy found in their HE work, was one of the most rewarding aspects of the role. They felt in control over the curriculum and how it was taught. Whilst the universities provided the Validation and QA, they then handed programmes to the FECs to run. Their managers' workload, lack of time and lack of understanding of HE compared to FE, meant they did not get too involved. This supports Ashwin's (2009) argument that there is weak framing in some commercially viable, regionally specific curricula, in non-elite settings, which is relevant to the localised nature of HE in FE.

Paradoxically then, these individuals find the autonomous 'informational environment' within the normally 'controlling environment' of FE which requires high compliance (Deci and Ryan, 1985, p162). Therefore, despite the rhetoric around the lack of HE ethos (Creasy, 2013), there are elements of the more autonomous environment traditionally associated with HEIs. Furthermore, this environment does not have some of the pressures of traditional HE, which would be considered controlling, such as the REF. Clegg has argued, this is a bonus for some of the newer academic identities (2008).

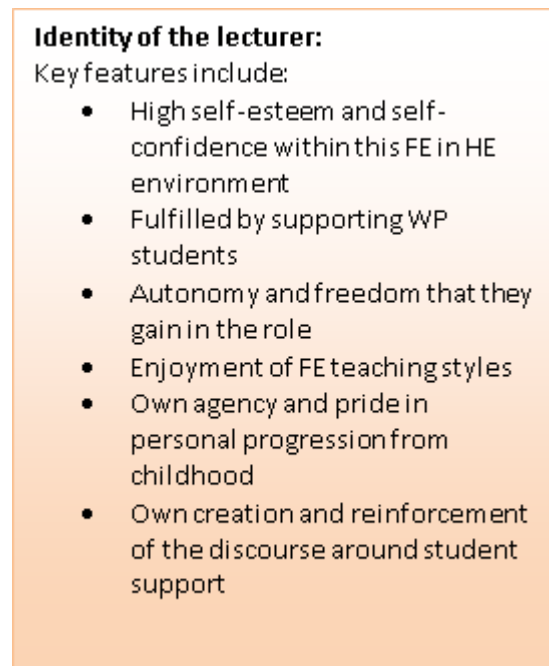
A significant factor in the ability, desire and fulfilment gained from the more autonomous teaching of HE rather than FE is confidence. It is not possible for this small study to generalise and future studies could usefully explore this further by allowing for a sample that includes those who do not want to teach HE or like Shelley, have given up the role. The ambitions and aspirations of the participants generally revealed that they felt many other FE lecturers in their settings did not have the confidence to carry out HE teaching, as they were doing, and similar polarisation was evident in Young's findings (2002).

The ability to find freedom and autonomy within the curriculum, demonstrates an area where the individuals engaged in ethically developing their identity as HE in FE lecturers (Infinito, 2003a). It appears that a significant aspect of the identity of the HE in FE lecturer is the ability to be autonomous in the classroom and to find fulfilment in this. This leads to some pedagogical freedom around how teaching and learning takes place.

## **The identity of the HE in FE lecturer and pedagogy**

The third research question asks whether the identity of the HE in FE lecturer has apparent pedagogical implications and there is evidence that it does. The key features create a profile of the identity of the participants in this sample. There are limitations around the generalisations that can be drawn from this due to the small scale of the study, and the idiographic nature was not looking for the similarities, but for individual experiences.

However, within these results, some key features appear as common or dominating and the themes that emerged around the identity are shown in Figure 14, below.

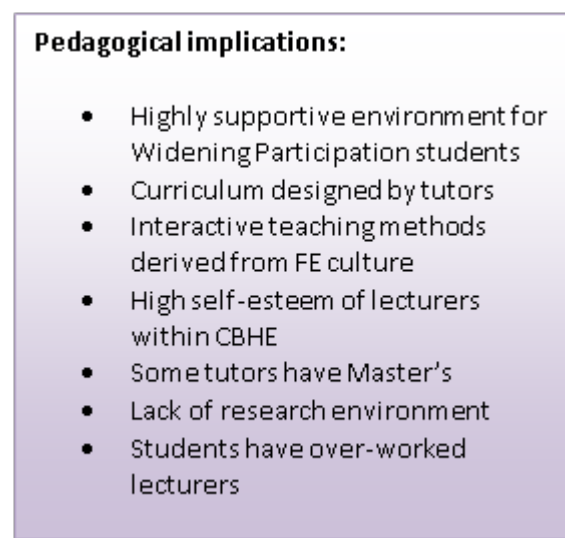


**Figure 14. Themes emerging around the identity of the HE in FE lecturer.**

These key features of identity are influencing the nature of the teaching and learning that the students experience. These pedagogical implications are shown in Figure 15, below.

The outcomes include a highly supportive environment for the students. There is freedom

and autonomy over the curriculum and classroom methods and this includes high levels of support for students and particular FE type approaches to teaching. However, these tutors appear different to their FE colleagues, having the high confidence and self-esteem that appears necessary for teaching HE in FE. These participants also had post-graduate qualifications including PGCE, Master's and one studying for a PhD. Some had published and most appeared to engage in high-level reading to support their HE work. So the environment was not the same as FE, even though it was not the same as traditional HEIs.



**Figure 15. The apparent pedagogical implications of the HE in FE lecturer identity**

The participants had a keen interest in the quality of their teaching and saw this as important. This is a common finding in other studies (Burkhill et al. 2008; Turner, 2009; Wilson and Wilson, 2011; Creasy, 2013). They discussed the notion of being a 'teacher' rather than a 'lecturer' in nuanced detail in some cases, and most argued that teaching and being a teacher was better. It was detached from the type of lectures that they believed took place in HEIs and it justified their high levels of support. There were strong views that

they offered something more for their students than they would have received in a HEI and this is in line with other small scale research (Burkhill, et al., 2008; Turner et al. 2009).

Some participants formed opinions after listening to student feedback from students who had left to do top-up degrees in HEIs, where students had found the transition unfavourable. This confirms Greenbank's (2007) view that students struggled with transitions to HEIs for their top-ups. Whether this is the outcome of the supportive environment of HE in FE, creating dependent students who find the difference of the HEI a negative experience or some other aversion to the change is not clear. Bathmaker and Thomas (2009) found that students had issues around transitions between the FE and HE courses within one college in their study. Furthermore, not all studies suggest that students do find the HE in FE environment supportive with some students showing dissatisfaction (McTaggart, 2016).

It is possible that the participants underestimate the reality of learning and teaching practices in HEIs. This concurs with Turner's assertions that HE in FE lecturer's views of HE were based on traditional models (2009). Some participants admitted that they were not fully aware of how learning and teaching happened in HEIs and felt that there were probably differences between types of HEI. There was recognition that some HEIs did have small group sizes and student-focused teaching practices, with June for instance feeling that there were many similarities between her course and her partner HEI's courses.

This sense of pride and fulfilment in offering, what they felt were high levels of support and quality teaching, was shared by most. Rebecca, for instance, took pleasure from inspiring

the students and she was enthusiastic about the methods that she employed to achieve success. She used what she termed a 'pink and fluffy' approach that she developed in her years of teaching FE, and she advocated the use of this for others teaching HE. The participants were champions of the FE pedagogy and of their type of HE over traditional HE in universities. They suggested that small class sizes, interpersonal relationships, active teaching methods and contact time was of good quality and equal to or better in some views, than the students would have in HEIs. This is in line with the views that Turner et al (2009) found amongst their participants.

For some, a significant influence in their teaching was their own positive experience of FE as students. This was fulfilling and transformational as they left behind unhappy school experiences in favour of the vocational world of the FE College. The participants showed intrinsic motivation to support these students. This appears to be a projection of their own feelings of fulfilment in their development through FE and HE, onto students which increased the desire to support them. They enjoyed their students' success creating a discourse and thus a reality around high levels of support as part of their identity. The evidence suggested that the participants formed particular relationships with students and that this did indeed impact on teaching and learning. There were smaller class sizes, high levels of contact either in class or through easy access to staff, and familiarity with students as they followed progression from FE into HE as other studies have found (Turner et al. 2009; Burkhill et al., 2008).

Simmons and Lea (2013) have put forward arguments questioning the quality of HE in FE and elements of internal verification and reinforcement of FE beliefs and cultures could be

contributing to a disparity of experience for students, which in the long run may not be as beneficial as the participants hold it to be. These students get offered high levels of support and, whilst this makes them more likely to succeed in these settings, it seems to foster less autonomous, dependent students. This could be supporting class reproduction as particular experiences occur reinforcing differences across the HE hierarchy rather than addressing them as Clegg asserts is likely (2011).

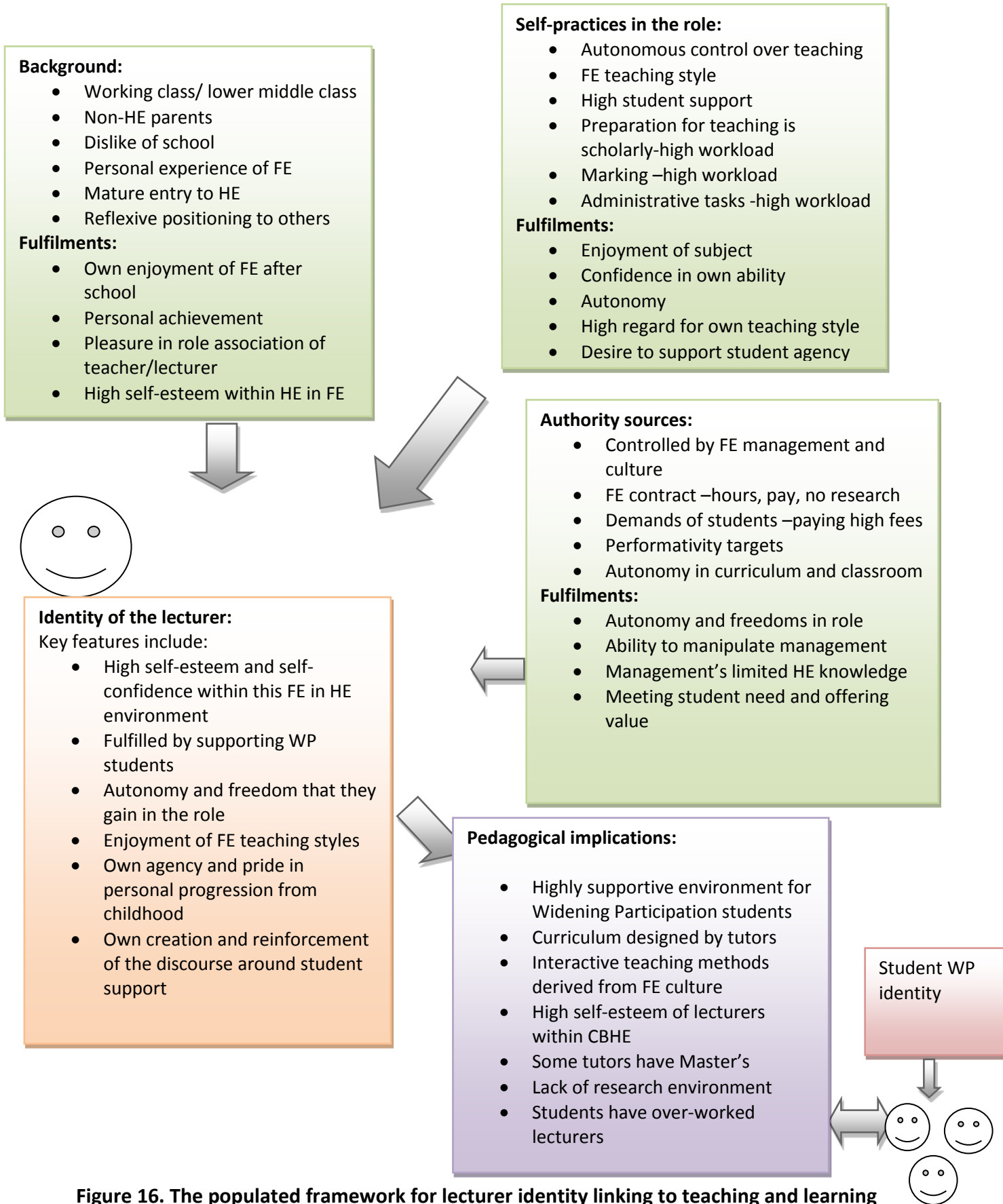
The perceived closer relationship between the student and tutor in these settings confirms that the processes of teaching and learning interactions are complex; approaches to teaching appear to relate to students' approaches to learning (Ashwin, 2009). If these students are emerging with a different, more supported experience then questions arise around their ability for independent learning and the polarisation of experience for different types of students (Bathmaker, 2016).

The flip-side of this coin is that if this does create an environment for success for these students, who do not necessarily have the background support of traditional HEI students, then this is a positive outcome for these individuals on a micro-level. The wider issue is whether this contributes to social mobility and ultimately to social justice. Creating something different, for this different group, is allowing individual achievement, but on a wider scale it does not address the differences in the verticality of the system, access to higher status professions and higher salaries (Avis and Orr, 2016; Bathmaker, 2016).

The diagram in Figure 16, below, is the fully populated framework used for the analysis, with the key areas of background, self-practice and relations with authority. The themes

emerging are interpreted as influencing the teaching and learning or pedagogy. The large face represents the lecturer and the smaller faces represent the students. The elements of identity combine and have implications for how they teach and support students. The students WP identity feeds back into this process, that is part of the FE culture, reinforcing and perpetuating the discourses around HE in FE.





**Figure 16. The populated framework for lecturer identity linking to teaching and learning interactions and student identity**

## Conclusion

Whilst this study did not look to find the differences between the lecturers in HEIs and CBHE, it is clear, that these participants are not the traditional subject specialist academic, not the white middle-class male (Clegg, 2008), and they did not come through research and post-doctoral research routes into lecturing as the traditional academic profile suggests (Harris, 2005).

Across the sample, these participants put teaching as their priority and offered high levels of support, to their students, whom they appear to relate to. These lecturers enjoy the autonomy granted to them and use FE teaching styles which they feel are better than those in traditional HE. The tutors feel over-worked and are lacking motivation to engage in research activity. However, more than half had a Master's qualification, one was completing an MA and another a PhD, which challenges the established view that scholarly activity is missing (Creasy, 2013).

In terms of the curriculum and teaching methods in the classroom, this allowed high levels of autonomy, freedom and control for the participants which they found very fulfilling and motivational. They were able to focus on topics of personal interest and could meet learning outcomes in their own way without heavily prescribed content. They used techniques to deliver and assess the curriculum that they perceived as different, with more dynamic activities unlike, they felt, traditional HE. Their students, therefore, do get a particular experience and, given the students' WP backgrounds, this appears to be a positive environment that enables success. It has differences to traditional HEI pedagogy and this

may not, therefore, lead to true social justice (Avis and Orr, 2016). However, as others have argued, there are many differences in teaching and learning experiences in HEIs (Ashwin, 2009) and verticality in exists across the wider hierarchy of HE (Clegg, 2011).

## Chapter Nine: Conclusion

This conclusion highlights the contribution of the thesis to our understanding of HE in FE lecturer identity, informing debates on HE in FE by offering an in-depth, nuanced view of the identity of the HE in FE lecturer. Their identity matters because it contributes to the environment and pedagogical experiences for the students and becomes part of the emergent student identity. The results have proven useful in contributing new perspectives and in both confirming and challenging some existing findings.

This is important because whilst FE in HE may be fragmented (Feather, 2013), marginal (Scott, 2009) and problematic (Creasy, 2013), it looks set to grow further. The continued thrust of the current government is in the direction of widening the ability to not only deliver programmes, but to gain Degree Awarding Powers [DAP] and university status more easily than at present (HE White Paper, 2016). Therefore, continued consideration of the experiences and identities of staff and students in these settings should be at the forefront of debate informing policy-making decisions around the creation and implementation of HE in FE.

This conclusion also offers a consideration of the personal rationale for the study and my position is revisited to offer a post-study reflection. There is an overview of the methodological contribution, which considers the framework, developed from Clarke's diagram (2009), as a potentially useful tool for further identity studies in similar fields.

## The HE in FE lecturer's identity

This study conceptualised identity as being an ongoing process of becoming that was neither singular nor static. The analysis, which was looking for the idiographic differences in experience and identity, found that there were similarities in the background, self-practices and pedagogical approaches of these participants, many of which were not anticipated at the outset. This study suggests that these marginal spaces are creating opportunities for widening participation for those who wish to lecture in HE. These non-traditional backgrounds find opportunities to enter the sector and this is broadening the identity of the HE lecturer and is part of the changing face of identities in HE (Eveline, 2005; Clegg, 2008; Whitchurch, 2013).

The background experiences of the participants included dislike of school, followed by fulfilment in FE, mature entry into HE, sometimes HE in FE, prior vocational careers, working and lower middle-class backgrounds with parents who had not been through HE, and post-graduate level qualifications. It is significant that this study finds that the background of the participant pre-disposes them to teaching styles that are supportive for their WP students. They offer what they perceive as high quality, interactive teaching despite the implications for their workload and this is part of the ethical formation of their identity (Infinite, 2003a; Clarke, 2009). At times this can be problematic as these lecturers create overwhelming workloads due to the amount of time they give to supporting students. The participants struggled to leave their established behaviours and beliefs behind, which meant that they developed a pedagogical approach similar to FE, with teaching and high levels of support as central. This study contributes to our understanding of the behaviour of these lecturers and

asserts that discourses emerge which suggest that these participants are complicit in creating the environment and nurturing demanding students, who expect high levels of support.

The students, according to these participants, are successful. Just as the lecturers once changed their lives through FE, they are enjoying being part of these students' progression. However, there may be detrimental side effects as students develop the need for high levels of support. This may create a different learning experience to students in more traditional HEIs and potentially lead to the creation of different emergent identities for those studying HE in FE. This can also limit the ethic0-political development and consequently the agentic ability of the lecturer.

This study found that there was little desire to leave the HE in FE environment to work in a more traditional HEI. A contribution of this study is that the importance of teaching and supporting students outweighs the importance of being research active. This maintains the position of the lecturers in the FE college as they dismiss notions of teaching in traditional HEIs due to this conflict. The evidence confirms a lack of motivation and time for research and scholarly activity due to the FE culture. Participants perceive a lack of appreciation and reward for scholarly and research activity which creates an environment where traditional research related activity is low, as Creasy argued (2013). This study suggests that that scholarly activity is mostly in relation to keeping up to date in their subject in order to prepare for teaching.

A significant finding of this study is that these lecturers find higher levels of autonomy than they did in teaching FE. The autonomy experienced by participants within the curriculum and in the classroom and the amount of time they spend reading on their subject, suggests that some elements of HE-ness are present for these staff and students. In particular, there are high levels of autonomy in the classroom. Paradoxically, this creates a situation where the participant maintains values and established beliefs, which can potentially limit their agentic ability. This perpetuates their behaviours and reinforces notions around their pedagogy which will influence the emergent student identity. This may contribute to maintaining the hierarchical nature of the UK HEIs, (Clegg, 2011; Avis and Orr, 2016).

In relationships with authority, this study found that there was less of a 'blame culture' than Feather found (2016) even though there was some cynicism and despair around workload. It was evident across the data that these participants had high levels of fulfilment and enjoyment in their role, with only one finding the HE in FE aspect of her role uncomfortable. There were variable relationships with line managers, from tolerant and distant, to supportive. Where relations had been difficult there were sorrowful accounts, but most participants appeared content, compliant and accepting. These participants were finding more autonomy in HE in FE than they did in FE culture. They all appeared to enjoy their role.

This study has shown how these lecturers worked upon a personal project within their environment. They recognised their position and, whilst this remained largely situated within the HE in FE setting, they engaged in self-practices which maintained or developed their situation. For instance, they were not keen to share information on what they did

with managers and did not particularly encourage their FE colleagues to teach on the HE programmes. Some of the ways in which this was experienced and perpetuated was through manipulating managers by flooding them with information, in order to prevent being micro-managed and to maintain their liberties. It appears that as long as they were confident and had high self-esteem, which, in this sample most did, they were highly motivated to maintain their position.

This study shows that as participants articulated how they presented themselves, various identities and elements of the self were constructed through actions and narratives. Consequently, discourses not only appear to emerge, but are reinforced in line with social constructionist thinking. This study contributes to the debates on HE in FE lecturer identity by showing that there was positioning of the self in a nuanced fashion according to audience, supporting the view that identity is linked to discourses of power, knowledge, and prejudice and that individuals are reflexive in forming identity (Giddens, 1991). This study found that detachment and attachment to non-desirable and desirable elements of the role varies for individuals, according to their own subjective view. In other words, marginalisation of the non-desirable and accentuation of the preferred, in line with Goffman's work (1963). This study contributes to our understanding of this HE environment by showing how the participants are part of the creation and reinforcement of the discourse around HE in FE and their subsequent identity.

In its earliest stages, this study incorporated the term hybrid in order to describe the role of the HE in FE lecturer, as others have done in relation to new academic identities and HE in FE (Clegg, 2008; Simmons and Lea, 2013). However, using 'hybrid' to describe this identity



suggests it has no identity of its own, and yet HE in FE is a field of its own. These individuals do not have two 'selves', this would not sit with the creation of the ethical self which this study has utilised. The elements of the framework derived from Clarke's use of Foucault's 'technologies of the self', suggest that strands of identity combine rather than identity consisting of merging roles (2009, p191). Therefore, this study contributes to the literature on identity formation by suggesting that such roles should be described as new or emergent rather than hybrid. This group are a breed of their own. They do not have to be viewed on a deficit model (McGhie, 2015). This looks for everything that they are rather than what they are not.

### **Methodology and personal development**

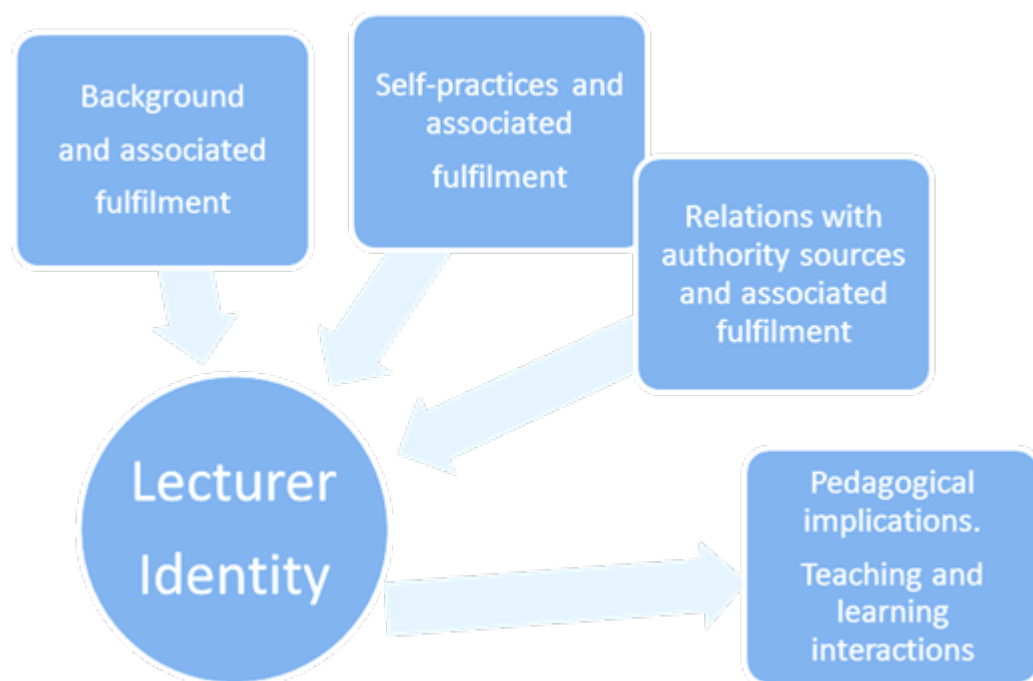
This study has helped me to better understand my professional positioning, personal ethico-political struggles at work and the discourses in my own realities that produce my identity. The process of exploring personal experiences and background in the early stages framed the personal interest in the focus of this study. In the pilot, a deeper understanding was developed of personal assumptions through unexpected responses by participants to some of the interview questions. The use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and the adaptation of Clarke's (2009) diagram to produce my own framework, helped to interpret the data, see the creation of discourses and find the struggles in the ethical care of myself, just as it was seen in the participants. It has also helped explore personal role self-practices, relations with authority sources and fulfilment in my role.

It was not anticipated at the outset that elements of my own background would be in common with the participants, other than the experience of teaching FE. It was surprising to find that personal dislike of school, followed by enjoyment in FE, was a shared experience and the motivational endpoints attached to this only became clear during the analysis. This is an element of the double hermeneutic that can be expected in IPA studies (Smith et al, 2009). Entering HE as a mature student and compromising on work ambitions due to family commitments were also common features between myself and some of the participants. However, there was a key difference, in that the participants did not generally want to teach HE in a HEI, apparently due to their lack of capital in the field of traditional HEIs. They also perceived their colleagues as largely not having the confidence to teach HE in FE. These elements emerged as significant aspects of the identity of the HE in FE lecturer which I had not anticipated, and this held a mirror to my own identity which appears to differ in this respect.

In the process of this study, it became clear that personal stance within the structural-agentic processes, front and back stage posturing, the discourse creation of multiple realities, is evident in my role and my identity is still 'becoming,' even emerging from this research is part of my identity formation. This self-practice of my role has required ethico-political struggles and taking care of the self, my self, whilst on the one hand completing this study, and on the other meeting wider competing demands. I feel that I know myself better, but I also feel that I am still working on my personal project. I am still becoming.

## A proposed new framework for future identity studies

The pilot study revealed some shortcomings of the original proposed methodology which was derived from Clarke's (2009, p191) 'diagram for doing 'identity work''. The Foucauldian terminology needed simplifying. There were elements missing from the framework and the structure needed amending. The revised framework made their background more explicit and rather than explore 'endpoints' as a separate entity, these are seen as fulfilment within the strands of background, self-practice, and relations with authority. This creates the lecturer identity which then produces and reinforces a particular pedagogy. The diagram shown in Figure 17, below, is put forward here as a potentially useful framework for other similar research in lecturer identity and this is a methodological contribution of the study. The use of this framework could give some consistency to studies on lecturer identity by clarifying the areas for analysis between studies.



**Figure 17. A revised framework for lecturer identity studies.**

## Conclusion

As part of the Widening Participation agenda, HE in FE makes this level of education available to students who would otherwise be unlikely to take part in Higher Education, and whilst this is not necessarily offering social mobility or addressing issues of social justice, it is changing the lives of individuals (Avis and Orr, 2016). This study asserts that more should be done to support this environment so that it can offer these students something that goes beyond a cheap alternative to traditional HE, which potentially polarises society. It should also offer the teaching staff opportunities and rewards for academic growth, improving their confidence and valuing the work that they do. This study contributes to the call for better recognition and definition of this sector margin and this role. The offer of HE in FECS takes HE to areas that were previously without local HE provision. This is significant for those populations in isolated areas and for those families with so little resource that local courses are the only option, in the light of high fees and accommodation costs.

The debates around the verticality and hierarchical nature of the HE system must continue. One of the most significant ways of addressing this is in broadening the opportunities for those with non-traditional backgrounds to teach HE. In the most optimistic moments, it feels as though an alternative way into teaching HE has emerged which opens doors for change. It challenges previous limitations of the fields. There needs to be flexibility in how this role continues to develop. For instance, with the acceptance of preparation for teaching being recognised as scholarly (Feather, 2014), and the acknowledgement that the autonomy of these lecturers creates HE-ness. Furthermore, the lack of propensity for being research active does not have to be set as a breed standard. There can be new discourses

that encourage the policy makers and individuals in these spaces, to create opportunities to motivate and reward a research active environment appropriate to the vocational setting of the colleges. Instead of measuring against the highest REF achieving institutions, there could be something different for these environments, and maybe the TEF will help. This study supports the notion for a categorisation of its own, like the former polytechnics had, focusing upon vocational skills, as Bathmaker has recently called for (2016).

Centres of excellence and knowledge, appropriate to the environment, would support a vibrant and viable setting giving students a cultural experience beyond FE, but in a relevant way that can be local and have wider interests simultaneously. This would allow the confidence of these HE in FE lecturers to develop further in relation to their own setting and specialism rather than in comparison to traditional HEIs.

This study supports attempts to define and value the contribution of HE in FE and the work of this new breed of HE lecturer. It may encourage the creation of second-level discourses around FE lecturers going on to teach in HEIs, if they wish to, and to gain doctorates. These lecturers could be part of re-defining HE-ness, of proving that if given the opportunity and confidence, HE in FE lecturers can develop into high-level subject specialists.

This is not to suggest however, that HE in FE is something that those working in this area should desire to leave. If these individuals are comfortable and successful at what they do and happy prioritising teaching and support this should not be demeaned, because this reinforces the hierarchy (Clegg, 2011). This may involve a particular type of research or scholarly activity that focuses on vocational practice, creating an appropriate academic

environment that the HE in FE students and staff deserve. The identity of HE in FE itself needs further discussion and direction so that those lecturing, the students and the wider community recognises and better understands what HE in FE means. If HE in FE is to grow in line with the recent policy suggestions, it is important to ensure that standards and quality are maintained and developed. Otherwise, the emergence of a different system for a whole socio-economic group could serve to polarise society and perpetuate inequality even if the intention is the reverse.

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## Appendix 1: Ethical approval



1 June 2012

Ms Linda McGhie  
c/o Research Institute for Social Sciences  
Faculty Research Office  
Claus Moser Research Centre  
Keele University

Dear Linda

**Re: 'Teaching Higher Education in Further Education: issues of hybrid identity'**

Thank you for submitting your revised project for review.

I am pleased to inform you that your project has been approved by the Ethics Review Panel.  
The following documents have been reviewed and approved by the panel as follows:

| Document             | Version | Date    |
|----------------------|---------|---------|
| Application Form     | 2.0     | 30/5/12 |
| Summary of Proposal  | 2.0     | 30/5/12 |
| Letter of Invitation | 1.0     | 23/4/12 |
| Information Sheet    | 2.0     | 30/5/12 |
| Consent Forms        | 2.0     | 30/5/12 |
| Questionnaire        | 1.0     | 23/4/12 |

If the fieldwork goes beyond the date stated in your application (15 December 2012) you must notify the Ethical Review Panel via Michele Dawson.

If there are any other amendments to your study you must submit an 'application to amend study' form to Michele Dawson. This form is available from Michele (01782 733588) or via <http://www.keele.ac.uk/researchsupport/researchethics/>

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Michele Dawson in writing to [m.dawson@uso.keele.ac.uk](mailto:m.dawson@uso.keele.ac.uk)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Dawson".

PP Prof Stephen Wilkinson  
Acting Chair – Ethical Review Panel

CC RI Manager, Supervisor

Research and Enterprise Services, Keele University, Staffordshire, ST5 5BG, UK  
Telephone: + 44 (0)1782 734466 Fax: + 44 (0)1782 733740

## Appendix 2: Invitation to take part



Dear .....

Thank you very much for expressing a possible interest in my study and giving your permission for [insert name of contact] to pass your contact details on to me. My name is Linda McGhie and I am undertaking some research for my Doctorate in Education at Keele University. I am exploring issues around identity for those teaching Higher Education in Further Education environments. I would be very grateful if you would consider taking part. This will involve completing a short questionnaire on how you came to be in your current role and some of the aspects of this, followed by an interview lasting no more than one hour, where I would like to hear your views on your role. There will be a follow up telephone call two weeks later so that we can follow up any issues raised and you can have an opportunity to reflect.

At a time of such change in the HE and FE sector it is vital to capture the views and experiences of those involved. My study, entitled 'Teaching Higher Education in Further Education: issues of hybrid identity' is intended to inform debate on this area and will be of interest to academics and those considering policy making decisions.

Please read the attached information sheet and informed consent form and email these back to me if you are willing to take part. If so I will then be in touch by email, or telephone if you prefer, to arrange a convenient time and place for the interview. The data will be anonymised in the thesis and any other publication. If you have any further questions do not hesitate to ask. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind Regards

Linda McGhie contact: [l.mcghie@ippm.keele.ac.uk](mailto:l.mcghie@ippm.keele.ac.uk)

Supervisor's contact: Dr. J. Waterfield [j.waterfield@shar.keele.ac.uk](mailto:j.waterfield@shar.keele.ac.uk)

Research Institute for Social Sciences, Social Policy  
Faculty Research Office  
Claus Moser Research Centre  
Keele University

Staffordshire ST5 5BG Tel: 01782 734256 Fax: 01782 733316

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/risocsci/researchcentres/socialpolicy/>

## Appendix 3 Information Sheet



**Study Title:** Teaching Higher Education in Further Education: issues of hybrid identity

### Aims of the Research

The aim of the research is to explore the way in which individuals experience teaching Higher Education in the Further Education environment. The key questions to be explored cover three main areas. Firstly, they consider the way in which being a HE in FE lecturer located with individual background, career history and aspiration. Secondly, the way in which the individual experiences their professional role in terms of relationships and aspects of their work, and finally it considers whether the hybrid nature of the role influences teaching practice and the student experience.

### Invitation

You are being invited to consider taking part in the research study *Teaching Higher Education in Further Education: issues of hybrid identity*. This project is being undertaken by *Linda McGhie*.

Before you decide whether or not you wish to take part, it is important for you to understand why this research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read this information carefully and discuss it with friends and relatives if you wish. Please ask me if there is anything that is unclear or if you would like more information.

### Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you currently teach on Higher Education programmes within a Further Education setting and therefore your experiences and views will be valuable to this project.

### Do I have to take part?

You are free to decide whether you wish to take part or not. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign two consent forms, one is for you to keep and the other is for our records. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time and without giving reasons.

### What will happen if I take part?

If you agree to take part you will at the first interview you be asked to complete a short questionnaire on your role, your setting and your background before taking part in an interview of no more than one hour, in order to discuss aspects of your role and the way in which you experience teaching Higher Education in your setting. The interview will be recorded and transcribed. Two weeks later, you will receive a follow up telephone call where you can reflect on the process of taking part in the research and on your thoughts. The data gathered will be used alongside the other participants' data to form a discussion about the way in which teaching HE in FE is experienced and how this links to your feelings of identity and to teaching.



**If I take part, what do I have to do?**

Taking part will require you to give some time for the interview process. I can visit you at work or a neutral location or you may prefer to visit me at my work.

**What are the benefits (if any) of taking part?**

By taking part you are able to share your views which can inform the debate on identity and on how Higher Education is taught.

**What are the risks (if any) of taking part?**

You may find yourself exploring areas that you had not considered before which may be positive or negative. The follow up telephone call will give you a chance to further reflect and an opportunity to discuss these

If after this telephone call you feel that the interviews have raised other issues you may find it useful to contact a Union helpline.

The location of your workplace and the name of your employer will not be stated at any point.

**How will information about me be used?**

The data collected will be anonymised and you will be given a pseudonym. The data will be transcribed by a professional transcription service. The data will be used for my thesis for the Doctorate in Education and possibly for subsequent publications. Your personal information will be kept confidential and all other data will be anonymised.

**Who will have access to information about me?**

Myself and my supervisor will be the only people who access this information. The data will only be used for this project and linked publications.

You may have access to the transcript of the interview if you wish.

I do however have to work within the confines of current legislation over such matters as privacy and confidentiality, data protection and human rights and so offers of confidentiality may sometimes be overridden by law. For example in circumstances whereby I am made aware of future criminal activity, abuse either to yourself or another (i.e. child or sexual abuse) or suicidal tendencies I must pass this information to the relevant authorities.

The data will be stored securely on a password protected computer and any paper files will not have your name or location linked to them. The data will be kept by me for at least five years following the project and in accordance with Keele code of Good Practice. When paper files are disposed of, this will be done securely.

**Who is funding and organising the research?**

The University of Cumbria have funded my fees, there are no other funding bodies involved

**What if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you may wish to speak to the researcher who will do their best to answer your questions. You should contact Linda McGhie at [l.mcghie@ippm.keele.ac.uk](mailto:l.mcghie@ippm.keele.ac.uk). Alternatively, if you do not wish to contact the researcher you may contact the supervisor for this study Dr. Jackie Waterfield: email [j.waterfield@keele.ac.uk](mailto:j.waterfield@keele.ac.uk); telephone.01782:733537

If you remain unhappy about the research and/or wish to raise a complaint about any aspect of the way that you have been approached or treated during the course of the study please write to Nicola Leighton who is the University's contact for complaints regarding research at the following address:-

Nicola Leighton  
Research Governance Officer  
Research & Enterprise Services  
Dorothy Hodgkin Building  
Keele University  
ST5 5BG  
E-mail: [n.leighton@uso.keele.ac.uk](mailto:n.leighton@uso.keele.ac.uk)  
Tel: 01782 733306

**Contact for further information**

Linda McGhie  
[L.mcghie@ippm.keele.ac.uk](mailto:L.mcghie@ippm.keele.ac.uk)

Linda McGhie,  
C/O Research Institute for SS and SP,  
Faculty Research Office,  
Claus Moser Research Centre,  
Keele University,  
Staffordshire ST5 5BG

01782 734256  
01524 384509 (Work telephone number at University of Cumbria)

## Appendix 4 Consent Forms



**Keele  
University**

### CONSENT FORM

**Title of Project:** Teaching Higher Education in Further Education: issues of hybrid identity

**Name and contact details of Principal Investigator:** Linda McGhie,

Linda McGhie,

C/O Research Institute for SS and SP, Faculty Research Office,

Claus Moser Research Centre,

Keele University,

Staffordshire ST5 5BG,

Tel Keele 01782 734256, 01524 384509 (Work telephone number at University of Cumbria)

[L.mcghie@ippm.keele.ac.uk](mailto:L.mcghie@ippm.keele.ac.uk)

**Please tick box if you  
agree with the statement**

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. | □ |
| 2 | I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time.  | □ |
| 3 | I agree to take part in this study.  | □ |
| 4 | I understand that data collected about me during this study will be anonymised before it is submitted for publication.             | □ |
| 5 | I agree to the interview being audio recorded  | □ |

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature



**CONSENT FORM**  
**(for use of quotes)**

**Title of Project:** Teaching Higher Education in Further Education: issues of hybrid identity  
**Name and contact details of Principal Investigator:** Linda McGhie,  
Linda McGhie,  
C/O Research Institute for SS and SP, Faculty Research Office,  
Claus Moser Research Centre,  
Keele University,  
Staffordshire ST5 5BG,  
Tel Keele 01782 734256, 01524 384509 (Work telephone number at University of Cumbria)  
[L.mcghie@ippm.keele.ac.uk](mailto:L.mcghie@ippm.keele.ac.uk)

**Please tick box if you  
agree with the statement**

- |   |  |                          |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| 1 | I agree for any quotes to be used        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | I do not agree for any quotes to be used | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|                     |       |           |
|---------------------|-------|-----------|
| _____               | _____ | _____     |
| Name of participant | Date  | Signature |

|            |       |           |
|------------|-------|-----------|
| _____      | _____ | _____     |
| Researcher | Date  | Signature |

## Appendix 5 Questionnaire

### 'Teaching Higher Education in Further Education: issues of hybrid identity'

Please fill in this questionnaire and return to me at the start of the interview.

Your current role Job title:.....

Please circle ☒ Yes or write in your answer e. g. 7

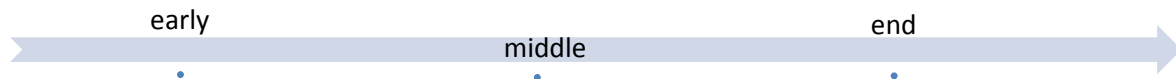
1. Do you teach solely HE? Yes No
2. Did you teach FE before teaching HE? Yes No
3. The 'contact' or teaching hours that you are expected to work in the year: .....
4. Is extra time allowed for working on HE modules compared to FE modules? Yes No
5. Is time allocated for research, scholarly activity or industry experience? Yes No
6. Optional question: Current salary range 18-23k 24-29k 30-37k 37-44k 45-53k 53k+
7. Holiday entitlement pro rata in days:.....

### Professional background

8. Age yrs :..... Number of years teaching..... Number of years teaching HE in FE.....
9. Your highest vocational qualifications or status e.g. NVQ/QTS/SRN: .....
10. Academic qualifications e.g. Diploma, Cert. HE, Fd, BA, MA .....
11. Qualifications in progress: .....

12. [Duplication removed]

13. Mark on the timeline arrow where do you consider yourself to be on a career trajectory:



### Your childhood

14. Do you recall wanting to be a teacher or lecturer? Yes No

15. What career did you aspire to?.....

16. What was your parents' employment?.....

### The future

17. Do you see yourself carrying on in this role? Yes No

18. Do you aspire to a managerial role? Yes No

19. Do you aspire to teaching HE in a university setting? Yes No

20. Do you worry about the future in terms of your role? Yes No

In terms of your future role do you feel: positive negative indifferent